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# CHAOS IN MEXICO

The Conflict of  
Church and State



BY

CHARLES S. MACFARLAND



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
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1935

CHAOS IN MEXICO

THE CONFLICT OF  
CHURCH AND STATE

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FIRST EDITION

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I AM deeply indebted to many friends in the United States, both Catholic and Protestant, business men and others associated with the Mexican Government, for the introductions given me, both directly and indirectly, to the more than a hundred men and women with whom I had interviews and conferences during nearly six weeks in Mexico. These individuals constituted sources of invaluable information and for their patience and consideration I am deeply grateful.

Mr. Kenneth Grubb, of London, who has had long familiarity with Latin America, was in Mexico at the same time, and from him I received much valuable information, especially regarding conditions in a large number of the several states which he had just visited.

From Their Excellencies, Lázaro Cárdenas, President of the Republic; Emilio Portes Gil, Secretary of Foreign Relations; Ignacio García Téllez, Secretary of Public Education, and their associates in the government, I was the recipient of every possible consideration and courtesy, as well as from Their Excellencies, The Most Reverend Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, Apostolic (Papal) Delegate, and The Most Reverend Pascual Díaz, Archbishop of Mexico.

Once again I owe a debt of gratitude to my associate of many years, Miss Antonia H. Froendt, and also to Miss Lizzie M. Bell, for preparing the manuscript for the press.

C. S. M.



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# CHAOS IN MEXICO



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I

INTRODUCTION



THE people of the United States have had to rely largely, during recent months, upon newspaper publicity and controversial propaganda for information upon the situation in Mexico. I would suggest that the reader detach himself from these sources as far as possible, especially from those which have tended to sensationalize evil things and those who have been equally inclined to utopianize in their stories regarding Mexico.

This study was made entirely upon my own personal responsibility. I have no connection, personal or official, with any interests whatever in Mexico. I made an earlier visit there, in 1922, with Dr. Henry Goddard Leach, representing the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The report which Dr. Leach and I presented on our return was in substance as follows:

“I. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN 1922: The political situation is confused, and no one can estimate

how long it will be before it emerges from this confusion.

"II. COMMERCIAL INTERESTS: Our American commercial interests have not, on the whole, been serviceable in the development of friendly relationships between the peoples of the two nations. In many cases they have had the opposite effect. We were greatly surprised to find that, generally speaking, the commercial interests have had relatively little concern for this matter. Comfortable clubs, hospitals, schools, and to some extent Union Churches, have been provided to meet the interests of American residents, but very little corresponding to this has been done for the Mexican people. There has been some slight welfare work for industrial workers, but it appears to have been rather negligible.

"We believe that an effort ought to be made to induce the commercial interests, which have unquestionably secured profits from Mexico, to make some return by assisting in the development of social and educational institutions for the welfare of the people, as well as some real help for our Missions. We feel, as the result of several frank conferences on this matter, that a persuasive effort in this direction would not be altogether without success. Disinterested philanthropists may lead the way, in order to inspire confidence among the Mexicans, but the oil and mining interests must follow.

"III. FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE: So far as we can learn, there is no adequate organization of American

people for the specific development of relations with Mexico other than one which is concerned with 'American rights.' There would certainly be opportunity for one devoted to American opportunities and duties in Mexico. At our closing conference it was recommended that we secure the organization in some form, in America, of 'The Friends of Mexico.'

"IV. SOCIAL WORK: Through the Missions and other religious institutions, but also through general movements, we should secure the initiation of varied forms of social service. Several of those with whom we conferred felt that the time was ripe for beginning a campaign for temperance, and even for prohibition, in Mexico.

"V. EDUCATION: We are persuaded that the greatest thing which the American Churches and the American people could do for Mexico would be to enter into co-operation with that country in the development of our common educational interests. A start has been made in this direction through arrangements for the exchange of students and the general plan has already been considered by the Committee on Co-operation in Latin-America and by other agencies, with whom our Committee should confer.

"What Mexico needs politically, socially, commercially and educationally is real trained leaders.

"The beginning of such a procedure should be the establishment of a university, broadly Christian in its character, in Mexico City. It would need especially a normal department of trained teachers for the public

school system, a department of agriculture, and a department of political economy. It should not be an American affair imposed upon Mexico, but invited by Mexicans, although we might appropriately send some of our best teachers to assist in its institution and development.

"VI. MISSION OF GOODWILL TO MEXICO: The sending of such a Mission, as has been proposed by the Federal Council's Commission on International Justice and Goodwill, should be associated with the plans suggested above and should take into account the question of timeliness so far as our political relationships are concerned.

"Your representatives have been deeply impressed on the one hand with the divine opportunity that we have in Mexico, and on the other hand with the fact that none of our national interests concerned with Mexico have as yet availed themselves of this opportunity, and that our next door neighbor internationally has received from America less neighborly consideration, and more unneighborly treatment perhaps, than any other nation in the world."

Perhaps the most important mission of good will was the sending of the friendship school bags from the children of the United States to the children of Mexico in 1928, under the auspices of the Committee on World Friendship Among Children (instituted by the Federal Council of Churches), and the collections of Mexican

arts and crafts sent to the children of the United States by the children of Mexico.\*

It has always seemed exceedingly unfortunate that there was no appreciable response in the United States to the proposal made in 1922 for the establishment of a Christian university in Mexico City. Sr. José Vasconcelos, at that time Secretary of Public Education, expressed his warm approval of the idea. Indeed, he said that the people of Mexico often wondered why the benevolent people of the United States should go far off to establish such institutions in the Near East and the Far East and never think of their near neighbor, Mexico. Later on, His Excellency, Pluto Elias Calles, President-Elect of Mexico at that time, also expressed the hope that such an institution might be established. May it not be possible that in these latter days such a Christian university would have had a beneficent effect in the present struggle in Mexico?

Thus I began this study with a really deep personal interest in Mexico and the Mexican people. In earlier days I was so favorably impressed with the ideals of the "Revolution" that, a few years ago, I rendered advice and assistance to a member of the official family who presented them widely to the American public. I suppose that I am politically and socially what would be termed a "progressive," and at any rate, on the basis of such previous knowledge as I have had, I

\* This project is described in two booklets: *Adventures in World Friendship* and *Recuerdo de Mexico*, published by the Committee on World Friendship Among Children.



have been deeply sympathetic with the reported measures of the present administration for social reform and was not without knowledge of the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico.

On the other hand, having the inborn conviction that religious freedom is among the fundamental bases of the State and of civilization, I had developed a growing sympathy for the religious institutions in Mexico whose liberty seemed to be in question. Therefore I was in the mood for an objective study which would, at the same time, be sympathetic toward both State and Church.

I was told by men who thought they knew something about the situation that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get any adequate information; that the Government and people of Mexico would resent any such inquiry; that I would not be cordially received; that if my mission were known I would be obstructed by the Government, and that in any case everybody would either dissemble or evade. Upon taking counsel, however, with men who were thinking rather more deeply, I was advised by both Catholics and Protestants, as well as by those whose point of view was more political, that such an inquiry ought to be made.

None of the ominous predictions was fulfilled. Of the hundred or more persons to whom I had access only three evaded conference. Indeed, all concerned appeared most anxious to have an opportunity to express their opinion and to give information. No secrecy was employed; the method was that of frank and open

conference, sometimes within one day on one side of Constitution Square, in the National Palace of the State, and also on the other side, in the now modest and even humble office of the Archbishop. To be sure, I did have to extricate myself somewhat from the impression made by the resolution to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Senator William E. Borah, advocating inquiry into alleged suppression of liberty in Mexico. I was asked occasionally whether or not I represented the United States Government. To meet this embarrassment, I issued a statement to be handed to all concerned, in which it was announced that I was not there as an "investigator" but to make a friendly and sympathetic personal and objective inquiry.

To all appearances, in Mexico City, other large cities, and so far as I could observe, in the country districts, there is an outward calm which might better be termed restraint in view of the political and religious situations to be considered later on in this volume. Mexican cities and towns are usually well behaved, and perhaps more so than ever just now. This is especially true on Sundays, due in part to the labor law naming that day as a day of rest. The stores are closed, little or no building is being done, and the streets are quiet.

There is an especially noticeable lack of hilarity and sensationalism in the entertainment of the Mexican people. There are one or two so-called night clubs in Mexico City, generally opened only on Saturday night. A hotel proprietor of my acquaintance invited me to look in on his night club one Saturday evening be-

tween eleven and twelve o'clock. While I have never seen any institution of this kind in New York City, I should say that in comparison with New York, the Mexican night clubs appear very much like an average entertainment in the parish or community house of one of our Protestant churches.

There seems to be little or no need of a "League of Decency" in Mexico, the movies advertised being almost entirely of a high grade. One misses the sight of the once familiar priests, as they are not now permitted to wear any garb indicating their profession, not even a high vest and collar, and the wearing of any religious insignia is proscribed for all citizens. On Sundays, visits to the cathedral and several churches at nearly all hours during the forenoon revealed large congregations at the Masses, including on one Sunday two weddings going on at the same time in the cathedral. So far as outward behavior is concerned, the Mexican people in general set a fine example, with the exception of course of the customary bullfights and similar forms of entertainment managed by the sporting and gambling fraternities.

It is not an easy task to present the political and religious situation at the present moment. Perhaps no country in the world has experienced greater changes or a larger number of transpositions in the course of the past seventy-five years, and more particularly during the last quarter of a century. Since the Madero revolution of 1910 these transformations have been kaleidoscopic and phenomenal.

This volume will need to go much further into the discussion of political questions than I had anticipated in what was intended to be mainly a presentation of the religious situation, because the latter is so overwhelmingly determined by the politics of the day. Among the changes observed since the régime of Porfirio Díaz came to an end, disregard of law and order was the most prominent. As will be seen in a following chapter, order has been largely restored, except when riot is instigated by the so-called "Red Shirts" organized by an imitator of Adolf Hitler in the present Cabinet, or by student demonstrations, and just now only occasionally by church groups to express their disapproval of the treatment of the Church by the State.

Many of the friends interviewed would say in reply to my questions: "Now you must not judge Mexico by the United States. That is the trouble with your people, they do not understand our heritage and the nature of our people, or the meaning of our progress." Therefore the reader should consider with a sympathetic mind both the previous political and social rule of the Church and the present efforts of the Government. The heterogeneity of the Mexican people is perhaps as great as that of any nation in the world. It appears to extend upwards from primitive survivals of the Neolithic Age to representatives of the highest types of civilization.\*

There are remote regions of Mexico where Spanish

\* Ricardo Rivera has given a remarkable exposition of this subject in his book: *La Heterogeneidad Etnica y Espiritual de Mexico*. Mexico D. F.: A. Mijares & Son, 1931.

is an unknown tongue and where the contact with either national or state government is really negligible. Indeed, there is a multitude of reasons which will appear later on why great credit should be given to many in the long succession of leaders since Mexico attained its independence. It has been remarked that the significant name of the somewhat historic town of *Aguascalientes* ("hot water") is a symbol of Mexican political and social life. One needs also to bear in mind the temperament of the Mexican people, which despite their diversity strikes a somewhat average norm. As a judge of one of the courts in a large city observed to me: "We Mexicans are characteristically intolerant. We tend always to take one side of a question, whether it is political, social, or religious, and refuse to acknowledge anything good in the other side." When I remarked in response that this perhaps explained the apparent tendency in Mexico to attempt the extinction of fires by deluges of kerosene and if that failed by gasoline, he replied: *Usted lo ha descrito mejor que yo*. ("You have described it better than I.")

There is every reason in the world why both the Government and the people of the United States should have a deeper interest in Mexico. While one frequently hears words of contempt for our past policies, and occasionally the observation that Mexico has little to expect from the United States, nevertheless one finds everywhere a desire to stand well among our people. This appears especially, of course, in government circles, the Church, and the labor organizations.

In this connection one is compelled to admit that while on the one hand there are among the American colony many men and women of splendid character and wholesome influence having the friendliest of associations with the Mexican people and a warm affection for them, there is another element in the business section of the American group whose influence is distinctly bad. These appear to be mainly men in more or less subordinate business positions, whose sole interest in Mexico is the making of money; they care little and know less than little about Mexican political and social life.

This question assumes considerable importance in view of the fact that Mexico is making bids for tourist travel, including great international gatherings of the Rotary and other clubs during the coming summer. While the Mexican Government is giving serious consideration to the drink problem, and has even in some states enacted partial or complete prohibition laws, one notices that in preparation for these crowds of American tourists drinking bars are being created "for women," meaning Americans, inasmuch as Mexican women have never needed such facilities. Thus there is the possible danger of increasing a kind of intervention in Mexico about as bad as the commercial, political and military incursions of the past.

If the reader finds that this volume leaves him in seemingly inextricable confusion, it may perhaps offer the best proof that I have presented an accurate story. In this connection, when contradictory attitudes appear

one needs to understand the Latin, and especially the Mexican, mind. The Latin mind is always punctilious to have political documents written down with exactness; the present rather cumbersome constitution is an example of this. When, however, action needs to be taken, this sense of exactitude seems to disappear, as will be illustrated in some degree throughout this volume. I had occasion to observe a similar phenomenon in Germany a year ago in making a like study.\*

The best that one can do, in preparing a volume on the spot, is to make a somewhat freehand drawing, as the objects do not stand still long enough for a photograph. I may, nevertheless, at least be contributing a chapter of history connecting past and present, although I shall be obliged to confine any prophecies as to the future to alternative possibilities.

The disease of chronic disorder in Mexico has continued about three centuries, and it is thus no wonder that it has not been cured in considerably less than one century. While, therefore, the present Revolution may long continue or may be followed by successive revolutions, this volume will, I trust, be helpful in interpreting and explaining the possible future courses which I have sought to indicate in the closing chapter. Moreover, as the problem of Church and State is today becoming world-wide and ominous, perhaps this narrative, as well as my similar study in Germany, may help to an understanding of a subject which is assuming a variety of forms with much identity in result.

\* *The New Church and the New Germany—A Study of Church and State.* By Charles S. Macfarland. Macmillan Co. 1934.

## II

# THE STATE IN MEXICO



WHILE it is not the purpose of this volume to add to the already large number of books on the history of Mexico, one cannot adequately understand the present situation without taking into account the political and economic life of Mexico from the time of the Conquest, particularly the period since the gaining of independence, and still more especially the course of events of the last seventy-five years. Indeed, the present revolution dates from 1910 and the existing administration is regarded as having its beginning with the presidency of President Calles, the earlier leaders associated with Madero and Carranza appearing to have passed into more or less complete retirement.

There is considerable doubt as to whether many of the Mexican leaders since Juárez have been characterized by scrupulousness and integrity. The analysis of the present State by Frank Tannenbaum\* is generally regarded as overdrawn in its presentation of the accomplishments of the administration. This author re-

\* *Peace by Revolution*, by Frank Tannenbaum. Columbia University Press, 1933.



gards the struggle previous to 1917 as one for the destruction of the feudal system in Mexico, and since that time as the effort to realize the ideals of the constitution. At the same time, it is his opinion that the present labor laws will restrict the development of industry in Mexico. The statement that the Mexican revolution was essentially the work of the common people may have been true in the earlier days, but at the present time this is very much to be doubted. In fact, one wonders whether Tannenbaum would write today of the Mexican situation just as he did in the earlier months of 1933.

He is, however, undoubtedly correct in his statement that: "The social revolution that has intermittently torn Mexico during the last twenty years may best be understood as an attempt to liquidate finally the consequences of the Spanish conquest." Tannenbaum's survey of the condition and development of the Indian race explains many things that are happening today.

During the past century and a quarter the changes in the racial composition of Mexico have been as follows (in round figures):\*

	1805	1930
White population . . . .	1,000,000 = 18%	2,500,000 = 15½%
Mestizo " . . . .	2,000,000 = 38%	9,000,000 = 56¼%
Indian " . . . .	2,500,000 = 44%	4,500,000 = 28¼%
Totals . . . . .	5,500,000 100%	16,000,000 100 %

\* The figures for 1805 are taken from *Mexico and Its Heritage*, by Ernest Gruening (D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), and those for 1930 from the current issue of the *World Almanac*.

Thus, over a period when the total population was almost trebled, the number of whites shows a slight decrease relative to the other two classes. The Indians have yielded first place to the Mestizos (of partly Spanish blood), who now number well over half of the total population.

Mexico is enjoying at the present time a period of prosperity certainly equal to that of most other nations. In November, 1934, Mr. John B. Glenn, agent of the National Bank of Mexico, in an address at the twenty-first National Foreign Trade Convention in New York, termed it: "The Economic Renaissance of Mexico," and described the country as having a stable government. This stability he declared is unquestioned. While later sections of this volume may cast some doubt on Mr. Glenn's estimate of the government, there is little question but that Mexico's economic and social condition is very greatly improved, a situation partly fortuitous perhaps, but nevertheless to the credit of the State in considerable measure.

The Government's "Six-Year Plan," inaugurated under the presidency of General Abelardo L. Rodríguez, began to operate in 1934 and is planned to extend through 1940. Drawn up by the National Revolutionary Party, it is an ambitious and largely idealistic scheme. It provides for the division and distribution of land, the redistribution of rural population, and interior colonization under an autonomous agrarian department. It is proposed to establish and maintain a minimum wage, free hygienic habitations and free medical and

pharmaceutical aid for the agrarians. Large sums are to be spent for irrigation, the development of cattle wealth, and the conservation of the forests.

The section of the Plan entitled "Labor" contains the following provisions:\*

"1. Every individual has a right to such work as enables him to satisfy his necessities and honest pleasures, work imposed upon him by society to contribute his share of energy toward the general good.

"2. The State will intervene directly or indirectly in guaranteeing every individual in the Republic his right to work.

"4. Collective contracts of workmen will be encouraged, to convert them into the only, or at least the most preponderant, relationship between industrialists and workmen.

"5. The State will protect labor agreements to safeguard the rights of workmen: guarantee a minimum wage sufficient to satisfy the workman's needs and honest pleasures with rating as head of a family; assure the stability of the workman in his position, as well as secure the other compensations and guarantees granted him by the Constitution and the laws.

"6. Regarding industrial relations, subjects of the State are duty bound to stimulate the growth

\* Throughout this volume the authorized translations are left unrevised.

of syndicate labor organizations, and majority rule will settle differences among them."

A board of conciliation and arbitration is proposed and there are indications that the Government will undertake supervision of employers' organizations as well as of syndicates of workers. Expenditures for education are to be constantly increased, beginning with a 15% increase in 1934 and running up to a 20% increase in 1939. Special attention is given to rural schools, providing for 1,000 additional in 1934 and increasing to 3,000 additional during 1939, making a total for the six years of 12,000 more rural schools. In several of the cities which I visited, the hospitals, parks, and playgrounds for children and similar institutions looking toward public welfare, commanded warm admiration. All or nearly all of them appeared to be new. The section of the Plan on "Public Health" is devoted mainly or largely to the work of prevention and includes special efforts for the reduction of leprosy, cancer, tuberculosis, and venereal diseases.

The National Revolutionary Party decrees that: "the Government is also obligated to establish norms of moral orientation and collective defenses with regard to specific social evils" including especially: institutions dealing with minor criminals and the establishment of asylums, "moral and social orientation houses for women, and free dormitories for the needy who have no access to work or hospitals." Energetic campaigns are to be made "against underlying causes of prostitution." Penal legislation is "to prevent and punish the

publicity of scandals and crimes." "Obscenity in amusement centers and in publications is also to be prevented." "Strict legislation for the purpose of minimizing the use of strong drinks, and the strict prohibition of the sale or use of harmful drugs," includes the provision of sanatoriums for drunkards and drug addicts. "The opening of saloons and gambling houses in workmen's quarters" is to be prohibited; "emigration is to be controlled."

Other sections of the Plan provide for the control of the natural resources of the country, including a rigid supervision of industry. Enormous plans for "communication and public works" are projected, to be provided for by taxation. The document outlines the scheme for creating a well-organized army, and closes with a section on foreign relations. This latter is concerned with the cultivation of friendly intercourse with all nations, special relationship with the Latin-American countries, and non-recognition of all foreign doctrine which tends to interfere with national and international rights in Mexico. Strict disapproval of international wars is expressed, and only those imposed by motives of defense are to be sanctioned. The present President, General Cárdenas accepted his nomination on the basis of this document.

Later on in this chapter evidence will be given from reliable sources as to how far this program is one of social reform or one of political expediency. One sees, however, considerable indication that it has gone some distance toward reform already. Indeed, quite a num-

ber of business men who themselves have been somewhat embarrassed by the Government frankly praised it for many of its social measures. There is evidence that the labor law, for example, requiring one day in seven as a day of rest, is being enforced. While the law itself names Sunday, in some places another day is substituted. Some of the laws compel industries to provide for the welfare of the workers, and I saw some splendid examples of the fulfillment of such requirements. It may be that in other respects so sudden and heavy a load will be placed on industry that the intentions of the law may be frustrated. I saw what seemed to be reliable figures indicating rapid and abnormal increase in the cost of production which may have this effect. Whatever may be the motives of the present persons in power, however, there is no question but that the present administration has much to its credit. A new middle class, of skilled and white collar workers is being created, wages are on the increase and living conditions are being improved.

When I invited His Excellency, Sr. Portes Gil, former President, and now Secretary of Foreign Relations, to tell me something of the present plans, he replied as follows:

“The partitioning of the Ejidos (commons) among the people is an immense task involving handling of the necessary funds by the Agricultural Credit Bank. The present budget of the Government contains an increase of some twenty million pesos for the capital

of the bank, and during following years this amount will be increased in order to take care of the needs of the farmers. There is also an increase in the organization of Agricultural Cooperative Societies to provide for the construction of extensive irrigation works, some of which are now finished.

"In the states of Tamaulipas, Aguascalientes, San Luís Potosí and a few others, agricultural colonies have been formed where the land has been subdivided and colonized. This is another aspect of the agricultural program of the Government. According to this plan the land is subdivided in sections of from five to fifty hectares (15 to 150 acres) for the purpose of encouraging small farm owners. In the Mexican 'commons' system the farmer belongs to a community which is the owner of all the land; he does not have the right to any title to his division, only the right to cultivate the land and to reap the fruits thereof.

"The matter of highways is now occupying the attention of the Government, especially the finishing of the highway from Mexico City to Laredo, which, according to calculations made by the President of the Republic, should be finished by September of this year. Thus Mexico will begin to fulfill its promise to help make an international highway, since we will then have a road from Laredo to Teohuacán in the state of Puebla—about 1500 kilometers of asphalted highway, which is a little more than half of the distance to Guatemala; and President Cárdenas has in mind to continue this road toward the south so that within a few years the

part of the international highway that belongs to Mexico will be completed. There is also being constructed a highway to Acapulco and Tuxpan, with a series of roads in the different states in order to connect the important centers of production with the National highways.

“Regarding the problem of the workingman, the numerous strikes which have recently taken place have no political character whatsoever. All the workingmen’s organizations which initiated this movement were merely asking that the labor law be carried out, and this law differs little from any labor law of the United States. This agitation of the workingmen is due to their confidence that the new Government will see that the laws regarding labor are faithfully observed. Unfortunately for my country, except in a few of the states, the majority of the workingmen and farmers are still a long way from obtaining all the rights which this labor law grants them. Even here in Mexico City the minimum wage has not been put into effect, since there are workmen who receive only forty and fifty centavos a day, which means 15 or 16 cents in United States currency.

“The most recent strike was that of the taxi chauffeurs. The contracts which these men had with the owners of the automobiles were a species of rent contract which required them to turn in to the owner eight pesos per day in addition to buying the gasoline and necessary minor repairs. The Secretary of Public Economy discovered after a careful study that in the majority of cases the chauffeurs were earning not more



than 40 or 50 centavos a day. When the chauffeurs went on strike all they asked was that the labor law should be enforced, that is that they should receive the minimum salary of 1.50 pesos and that the owners should pay for accidents, sickness and social insurance. The strike was settled in the most favorable manner. The majority of the owners said they could not submit themselves to the conditions of the labor law, and therefore the chauffeurs themselves are purchasing the automobiles and working them. The chief characteristic of these movements of the workingmen, as I have said before, is that the organizations are simply asking that the different clauses of the labor law shall be enforced."

Despite what has been said just previously, it is difficult to find anywhere really outspoken friends of the present Government, outside the members of the National Revolutionary Party, the Government itself, or those who receive some direct personal benefits from it. The causes for this will appear later in this volume. At this point, however, we may say that this is largely due to lack of political faith in the personnel of the Government, the reasons for which will also appear.

None the less it should be said that the present Government is less a government of men and more a government of laws than a number of previous administrations. Its forces are thus enabled to rally around ideas rather than simply to the side of a victorious general. The members of the Cabinet apparently have open doors to all who seek their favor. My interview with Sr. Portes Gil, Secretary of Foreign Relations, which

occupied about an hour, caused a great deal of indignation on the part of seventy-five or a hundred individuals held up in his outer office. The office of the Secretary of Public Education is always filled, and he gives a large amount of time to personal interviews. It is probably this method—somewhat like Tammany Hall—that gives considerable stability and strength to the present administration.

The criminal laws of Mexico are claimed by friends of the Government to constitute a remarkable experiment in the judiciary. The effort of law is declared to be not punishment but the reform of the law-breaker. Pathological methods are used in the determination of the disposal of criminals.

The Mexican constitution, a curiously complete and detailed document, was adopted by a rather tumultuous convention in 1917. It was evidently prepared to meet primarily the concrete situation of the moment. Many of its details are over-particularized. This results in constant revisions, amendments, and additional regulations. The constitution therefore is not so much a "bill of rights" as a plan of government for the moment.

It needs to be remembered, however, that Mexico is endeavoring to express ideas and ideals in both legislation and direct action. The result is kaleidoscopic. We must not, therefore, expect too much clarity in too short a time. A competent observer tells me that the accomplishments of the present Government are much more impressive in the country than in the towns, and in all probability there is, collectively speaking, more support

for the Government from the peasants than from the middle classes in the cities.

One needs also to consider the lack of material with which the administration has to cope. There is a scarcity of trained technicians in Mexico. Successive revolutions have prevented the development of orderly and organized administration. Mexico has also been the constant and continuous subject of outside influences which partly account for its seeming contradictory policies. Reliable employees have not been developed.

In some directions, however, the Government has stabilized itself: its army of 55,000,—a large one for Mexico in peace time—is now well officered, many of its officers have been educated in the United States, and it has generals of the professional rather than of the self-constituted variety; it is so distributed over the nation as to be ready for anything that may happen at any point. Of course the reader must keep in mind that army men in Mexico, as elsewhere, have a dislike for politicians, and there is little doubt that the soldiers themselves retain their allegiance to the Church. We cannot be sure, therefore, whether or not they might get out of hand if an emergency arose.

Mexico does not seem to share the fear of war manifested by other nations. There is, I believe, no compulsory military training, beyond simple physical exercises without the use of rifles, and the former governor of one of the states told me that public opinion was against anything like conscription or compulsory training.

While there is thus much to be recorded to the credit

of the present Government of Mexico, all this loses a good deal through the constant appearance of confusing cross-currents. Mexico has never in all its history had a really democratic government and it has always been negligent regarding the observance of its several constitutions and its multitude of laws. Although, as I said above, Mexican politics have not shown a progressive succession of ideas and ideals, there has been a continual procession of personal leaders. The revolutionists have thus followed men rather than political and social principles, with the result that hope has been followed by disillusionment.

Recent successive Cabinets have consisted largely of members of one group exchanging offices with one another. Since the days of Ambassador Morrow, the National Revolutionary Party, which is today one and the same with the Government, has constantly increased its power, and has either displaced or absorbed the voluntary labor, agrarian and professional groups, thus approaching Fascism in political, economic and social life. The platform of President Cárdenas was nationalistic and hence anti-foreign; it magnified the interests of agrarianism and labor and was of course anti-church and anti-clerical. The present governmental linguistics of Mexico are always proletarian.

While some business men have testified that the present Government is relatively free from graft there is continued evidence of individual exploitation. Administrative expenses appear to have been substantially reduced, but officials of the Party and the Government

make lavish display of their riches, including the continued erection of magnificent palaces and country residences. Indeed, Portes Gil is reported as having said in an address:

“The Revolution has had individuals who have enriched themselves while in power; it has had to lament those that were frightened by the truth; it has had to mark on its dark pages some of its members who through vandalism and arbitrariness have become rich, some of them fabulously rich. But it has not been sidetracked by these events. On the contrary, the fact that the Revolution has been able to swallow so many of its children merely proves its greatness as a reconstruction movement.”

Former President Abelardo Rodríguez, who now is sponsor of the high ideals set forth in the Six-Year Plan, is known to have amassed excessive wealth. At the immediate time of my conversation with President Cárdenas, he was the last visitor to precede me and I was told that he is now one of the advisers of the President, especially since his recent visit to President Roosevelt which is supposed to have been in connection with the resolution proposed by Senator Borah. One influential citizen affirmed that there was considerable demand in labor and other circles for the investigation of private fortunes in Mexico. When I called attention to these infelicities in administrative circles, one of the

supporters of the Government laconically remarked: "Well, revolutions are not usually made by saints!"

One does not discover in the government personnel many who could be called profoundly intellectual, or who reveal an understanding of history or political philosophy. The administrative policy appears to be largely opportunist and the reform measures seem to be lacking in depth. We shall refer to this later on in the discussion of what is termed "Mexican Socialism."

The press appears to be free and at times it presents rather vicious caricatures of Calles and other leaders. Diego Rivera, in his frescoes in a government building, has one said to represent Calles receiving money from the priests. That there is, however, a tendency toward the control and especially governmental use of the press and of the radio, there is little doubt. There are unquestionable examples of the censoring of mail and of a fairly well organized system of espionage. My presence appeared to be unnoticed by the police until I made my visit to Archbishop Díaz. Immediately following it, a young man who was rendering me some assistance as a guide to locations in Mexico City was approached by an inspector who made detailed inquiries of him regarding my purpose and movements. Official information, however, was immediately given to the police, they were relieved of the fear that I might be a priest in disguise, setting up a counter-revolution, and I saw no further evidence of special interest at police headquarters.

That the Government is following a process of experimentation is obvious. As a rule, sensational projects appear to be tried out in the states, often in those remote from the Federal District, rather than in the Federal District itself. This would give the central government the opportunity to claim initiative if the plan is successful and to evade responsibility if it fails. As a rule, when there are extremely radical experiments they begin in a remote state.

There seems to be a tendency to substitution in practice, as when liberties are taken away in the granting of new rights or benefits. The rights of the people as individuals appear to be ignored and they secure such only in so far as they belong to coherent unions, syndicates or other groups. This has the effect of repressing or dividing public opinion. Another method of retaining control, whether intentional or not, is that of arousing minority or opposition groups by inciting or provoking them to allegedly illegal acts which give reason or excuse for punishment or repressive action.

Legislative action, which occurs with great frequency, often seems to be taken without much knowledge on the part of the people and to be in actual effect before there is any opportunity for public discussion. There is apparently a definite policy in the use of terms which are capable of several meanings or shades of meaning, so that action may be taken in any direction which the pragmatism of the moment may seem to demand. Whatever may be regarded as the madness of the administration, there is a good deal of method in it. When

I came to inquire as to the whereabouts of certain conservative personalities whom I knew to be men of political influence, I was told that, in some cases, they had been side-tracked by being sent abroad as ambassadors, or by other similar means of elimination.

Perhaps these observations may explain the apparent absence of opposition. As previously observed, however, it was difficult to find any really enthusiastic supporters of the present administration except within its own circle, among its beneficiaries and among governmental employees. Even with the latter there was a tendency to great moderation. As a rule, a government employee will affirm that his particular department is working satisfactorily but that he is not so sure about any of the others. Often, however, he is reticent about the Government. It is very clear that, so far as the aristocracy, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie are concerned, they are both critical and hostile toward the Mexican Government. This, it is claimed, is largely due to the fact that the Government has cultivated the workers rather than the white collar class, but the working classes are by no means so loyal to the administration as might appear on first sight.

So far as the masses of the people are concerned, they are usually either uninformed or misinformed, and frequently they are hesitant about expressing their judgments publicly. The story goes the rounds of Mexico City that a Chinese resident, being met by an enthusiastic supporter of one of the leaders, was challenged by him with a loud voiced: "Whom do YOU shout



for?" The Chinese resident bowed with oriental politeness and replied: *Pase usted, señor; grite usted primero*. ("After you, sir; please shout first.") Another common observation is that Mexico is now ruled by two generals: General Calles and general discontent. There is, however, no organized or unitedly vocal opposition to the Government whatever. The only political party is the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*.

This prevailing discontent is not only unorganized and without unity, but comes from a variety of sources—from conservatives, progressives, and so-called "Reds"; therefore it is due to a great diversity of reasons, some of course personal and political; Catholics because of anti-religious policies, liberals because of the constantly appearing series of documents and repressive regulations, radicals because things do not move fast enough. All this prevents organization and effective vocal expression. There appear, however, to be several issues on which all might well more or less be agreed. One of these is the strangle-hold which they allege the National Revolutionary Party exerts all over the country, whereby those who are not members of the Party are for all practical intents and purposes deprived of their political rights.

One of the alleged catchwords of the Party is: "Effective suffrage—no reelection." Many Mexicans who feel that going to the polls is futile simply refrain from voting on the ground that the elections are merely staged by the Party. They say that Mexico is democratic nominally but that its political structure is really

assuming the form of those in Italy, Germany or Russia. Facetious Mexicans sometimes shrug their shoulders and, pointing to the above-mentioned caption, suggest that there is only an error in word order, and that if the words were rightly placed, "no" would come before "effective suffrage" and that in this way the word "re-election" would be left isolated and give no trouble! This, of course, refers to the customary appointment of the retiring president to some other Cabinet office or other position of power.

As far as I could learn, every Deputy with one exception, every member of the several state legislatures, every official, from the President of the Republic and the state governors down to the janitor of the public buildings or the street sweeper, is a member of the National Revolutionary Party. They are all obliged to contribute five days' pay in the year to the support of the party, this sum being deducted from their pay checks, which in the case of all federal employees is declared to be done directly by the Minister of Finance. Thus it is frequently charged that the National Revolutionary Party is supported out of public funds.

Much opposition is expressed to the alleged "remote control" by former President Calles, who directs the Revolutionary Party. The ineffectiveness of all this opposition is of course largely due to this self-perpetuating character of both the Party and the Government. Whether anything other than armed revolt would break up this vicious circle is doubtful to many thoughtful men. Opponents of the administration deplore the sup-

posedly low intellectual and sometimes moral level of the Government employees. They point out that in spite of their much vaunted "Socialism," former Presidents and Cabinet members own sumptuous hotels and have great financial interests in monopolistic corporations; they themselves live in luxurious private residences and provide them for their sons and daughters.

It is claimed that when you come to politicians of the second rank you find an aggregation of desperadoes between whom there are frequent shooting affrays when they are not engaged in some concerted attack on somebody else. Whatever may be the truth in these matters, the whole atmosphere, particularly of the Federal District, is saturated with mistrust and dissatisfaction. I should say that the man who seems to be farthest from such charges as the above is President Cárdenas, who, while generally regarded as lacking intellectual gifts, is credited by many of the opposition with being a man of personal honesty, political integrity, and devotion to service. None the less, as we shall see later on, there is an effort being made by at least some of the opposition elements to discredit the President even more than some of the members of the Cabinet.

I tried to find out to what extent the Six-Year Plan had captivated thoughtful people in the Federal District. I could not find that there was any very deep interest in it and many of them regarded it as a mere piece of "window dressing."

As already intimated, all the opposition, widespread as I believe it is, does not seem to offer any immediate

solution of the nation's problems. The difficulty is that it comes from people whose ideas appear to be basically antagonistic to one another. There is some evidence, though, that leadership may appear from the universities, more particularly from the National University of Mexico. In a nation so traditionally addicted to the idea of personal leadership, the fact that no such leader has arisen leaves little hope in that direction. José Vasconcelos, the defeated candidate at the last election, is out of the country. General Antonio Villareal appears to have but meagre support. From opposition ranks one is often reminded that the present situation is not without a good deal of resemblance to that of 1910 near the close of the régime of Porfirio Díaz. One well-informed man, referring to the sowing of the seeds of hatred by the National Revolutionary Party, closed our interview by quoting: *Quien siembra vientos recoge tempestades*. ("Who sows the wind, reaps a tempest.")

In addition to everything else, there is lack of unity both within the National Government and between the states. In various parts of the country, among the *agraristas*, a good deal of collective support of the Government exists, but there, too, true to the Mexican temperament, individual discontent is to be found, even among those who appear to give consent to collective approval and support. The Government endeavors to win sections of the people not altogether by constructive methods and persuasion; it tries to get the support of the anti-clerical element by attacking the Church, while at the same time it seeks to win the common

people who compose the constituency of the Church by handing out proposals, plans and procedures in the interest of social justice.

In these and other ways this Government, with wide divisions in social philosophy within its own circle, seems to manage somehow or other to keep itself in a state of equilibrium. Although one constantly hears reports of the stirring of revolutionary movements, the army appears to be strategically situated so that the unrest soon subsides. That there are groups of rebels there is no doubt and it is asserted that it is only their inability to secure arms and ammunition that prevents disorder. In any case, while the Government appears to be in complete control, its policies are obviously full of danger, even were all those concerned honest and sincere men.

I will now interpret the preceding analysis of the opposition by reporting expressions of personal judgment made by some of the highly informed and unquestionably honest men with whom I conferred.

Perhaps the most frequent observation, made even by those who had a good deal of commendation for the social and economic projects of the Government, was that Mexico is so dominated by political expediency that you cannot tell anything about the motives, either of the Government as a whole, or more particularly of individuals powerful in it. This territory of human motive is one, however, into which the angels would fear to tread, and I shall not attempt to analyze the impulses which are expressing themselves in social ac-

tion except in so far as the facts which I shall present later on may raise the question.

One of the most highly-informed leaders of industry, a man who has been in Mexico for a long period, and who, it should be said, has suffered and is likely to suffer commercially at the hands of the Government, nevertheless was inclined to give it much credit. He called attention to the building of highways, said that the administration had done very much for labor, although little as yet for the peasants; that there was relatively little graft (adding that one of the most important cases involved graft on the part of a United States contracting company); but he stated that in his opinion the Government was attempting to go faster in placing burdens upon industry than industry could possibly stand. He regarded the attack on the Church as an indication mainly of the purpose of the Government to get control of everything.

A Mexican economist of notable standing took the ground that the Government was misguided in its efforts to develop production without an equivalent endeavor to stimulate consumption. He said that since the Government had stopped the Indians giving money to the Church and to art, they were now buying *pulque* as they had not yet learned how to spend. One man who follows the political issues closely, described the trouble as being that the Government would so frequently say one thing when it meant another thing, and that the only stable element in it was one man, General Calles, who is now getting unstable!

A group which might be termed representative of the intelligentsia calls attention to the fact that the Cabinet contains capitalists, Communists, and all kinds of Socialists, some of whom are idealistic, some realistically practical, while others are simply the usual government grafters. One of this group observed: "You can't tell whether this government is attempting to be a representative democracy or an exponent of Marxian Socialism." The agrarian redistribution of land, while socially desirable was, so far as government action was concerned, a humbug. It was simple confiscation, inasmuch as it gave the former owners bonds which had no value—when it gave them anything. This group was a unit in declaring that the intelligent workers simply laughed at the Socialism of Calles, in view of his capitalistic enterprises. They analyzed the Constitution as being simply a party platform changed from day to day to meet the needs or often the whims of the moment. The anti-Church campaign was instituted purely for ulterior political purposes.

One man, of the very highest standing in all circles in Mexico, said that he, with many other honest men, would like to join the Revolutionary Party but that he could not do so because of the manner in which its leaders sink their consciences for ambition and gain. Too much of the good work they accomplish is to gain power and satisfy ambition. They did not take the land to help the peons but as a political move in their own interest. Another man of high reputation reminded me that property had been divided up largely among

a considerable number of generals who, he said, are not likely to be any better custodians of it than the Church. Another well-informed and well-disposed man said: "the present State is not a State, it is just one of a succession of *cabals*, composed of a dictator, or a group of politicians, supported by a closed corporation known as a party." As an illustration of the opportunistic manner of amending the Constitution by laws and regulations, the action taken a few days before regarding the restriction of mail (in response to objections by the United States) was cited.

One of the most interesting phenomena was the number of men—and some women—including a good many teachers, who had originally been enthusiastic proponents of the Revolution, but who now reject it. This group included some men who had fought with Madero. There are others whom I recall as having been high officials in the revolutionary movement and Government a few years ago, who now express views which indicate a process of disillusionment. One of them said: "The 1910 revolution and this succeeding administration had a splendid chance. They lost it, however, by their ineptitude and are now trying to regain it by the ruthless attempt at control. Among them, however, there are men who are trying to find the way of statesmanship."

On the other hand, you find a considerable number of the younger men who appear to be losing the natural idealism of youth. One of them remarked that he



had no objection to the wealth of General Calles because he was using the power that it gave him to enable the coming generation also to secure wealth. While Mexican business men as a rule were inclined to be reticent, one of them observed that the Cabinet was in part an "insane asylum," that the Government was experimenting with all kinds of contradictory proposals at one and the same time, but he believed that the pendulum would swing back ultimately under the influence of the genuine common sense of the people.

Other men of affairs declared that the general state of themselves and their fellows was that of irritation. Not infrequently men who were far from being partisans one way or another lamented what they felt to be a discernible decline in family life and in morals, generally speaking due to the depreciation of religion. Some will tell you that while the Government is putting on some extravaganzas, in the main it is good. Perhaps the most frequent hope expressed was that a *via media* would ultimately be found through the necessary changes in the personnel of the Cabinet.

One professional man, whom I found politically informed almost down to the last day, felt that he saw some signs of increasing moderation in all things. He called attention to the fact that, other than the arrest of Archbishop Díaz which may have been unintended, there was evidence of a restraining hand somewhere. This he felt was due to Senator Borah's proposed resolution, and he thought it may have been the result of

the report by former President Rodríguez to President Cárdenas after his return from a call on President Roosevelt. He regarded the apparent disappearance from public view of the so-called "Red Shirts" as indicating hope for moderation although not for the cessation of the Government's extreme tendencies.

My informant asserted that while public opinion counts for nothing in Mexico, that coming from abroad has great influence. At the same time he observed that, unfortunately, the elements in the Revolutionary Party which have become less radical are composed largely of dishonest politicians who have made money during the past few years and therefore now look at Communism from a different angle. They had nevertheless been of influence in securing some sobriety. This change of policy, he felt, was almost entirely on the surface and the great causes at issue are not really gaining by it, because the Government will go on doing things on the sly, with less demonstration than formerly. In other words, the destructive elements will be more insidious instead of following their previously sensational methods.

From a large proportion of those whom I interviewed, the opinion came that present conditions are likely to continue indefinitely. It was frequently emphasized that if the right sort of influence were exercised in the right way by the United States, it would induce moderation although not reform. I will close this series of expressions of personal judgment with one from an

American who appeared to me to be among the most restrained and judicious of any whom I met:

"One of the first characteristics of the present situation in Mexico that ought to be taken into consideration is the state of confusion that exists among political and other leaders. While there is an official government policy, there is a wide divergence of opinion even among the small group of high government officials.

"The 1910 Revolution started with two chief aims: first, the redistribution of land, and second, universal education. Land and books were the two most important words during the first years of the Revolution. When the military revolution was finished and the old group was removed and the new group found itself in the saddle, political differences came to occupy more and more of the attention of the leaders, and original social aims and reforms came to be used more as political expediences and less as great ideals. For that reason every great issue or problem in Mexico has two aspects, its political aspect and its idealistic aspect.

"My personal feeling is that if Mexico is moving toward the totalitarian state, it is because of political reasons and not because of deep convictions regarding the intrinsic superiority of such a state. I think the same thing can be said of the government's support of the labor movement. It supports the movement for political reasons and not from motives of justice. I mean, of course, that in general this is true. Doubtlessly there are exceptions.

"In regard to the religious situation, I do not think that the opposition to the Catholic Church is based on a well studied conviction that religion in general is bad for the people, but rather on the experience that the Church from the start has been suspicious of the revolutionary movement. As the conflict has deepened, however, leaders here and there have come to oppose all religion. The government has not opposed Protestants so much because, on the whole, the Protestants have been sympathetic with the Revolution. But since the laws could not be directed against any one religious group, with their increased enforcement the Protestants have been more and more affected. As this conflict between Church and State has increased, the government has become more and more set in its resolve to destroy all Churches. And my own feeling is that we may not hope for any change in the government attitude, at least for the present. There will probably be periods of crisis, with periods of comparative calm in between, but each crisis will no doubt result in gains for the government and losses for the Church. And these losses will apply to both Protestants and Catholics.

"One should not lose sight of the fact, however, that in spite of the confused situation and the fact that so much of the government's work is handicapped by the constant intrusion of political issues, there are many leaders occupying government positions who are not what we popularly call 'politicians', but who are doing splendid, constructive work. In the field of education, with all of the defects that can be found, and despite

the waste of human energy by shifting able men around so much they do not have time to bring splendid plans to a conclusion, a fine start has been made in the direction of raising the social and intellectual plane of the people. The rural school system has much to commend it, and examples of wonderful sacrifice and devotion on the part of teachers and school directors can be given. In the field of health and hygiene, a great amount of most commendable work has been done. In the health department are to be found men of great ability and splendid devotion. In the field of public works, such as the great irrigation projects for reclaiming desert lands, many fine projects have been carried out. And in connection with the labor movement it must be recognized that there has been an awakening as to human values that has helped the Mexican laborer to gain a new conception of his own worth. The Revolution has had much of good in it and Mexico has possibilities now that she could never have had under the old régime.

"Mexico is at least moving. In many ways she may be moving in the wrong direction, but she is moving. And her mistakes are all easily explained when one looks into her history. My own attitude is that of great sympathy and of real affection for the Mexican people. I look for Mexico to go in the direction of a totalitarian state. I believe that organized religion is going to find more and more obstacles in its path. I believe that the trend is decidedly toward Communism. But one cannot tell whether these trends may not be changed because of the general political instability. For Mexico has never

been unified. One of the most marked characteristics of the country, according to the frequent declarations of her own leaders, is her internal divisions. The politicians are divided. The labor movement is divided. Her educators are divided. And these divisions are not based on differences of opinion as to social and political theories. They are personal. Personal enmities and the seeking of vengeance play a big part in Mexican political life. And for this reason it is next to impossible to predict with any degree of certainty what will be her future."

Despite such estimates as the foregoing of the beneficent accomplishment and still more generous plans and programs of the present administration in Mexico, much doubt as to the future must still be expressed. It is a minority Government professing to be a representative democracy. Its friends are largely found among the recipients of its bounty in one form or another. It maintains complete control, although its personal forces hold divided theories, if not divided counsels and interests. Self-interest constantly appears in its unity of action. Its policy is largely that of experimentation, not only in direct action, but also in the search for social and political philosophy. It is a combination of men among whom there are undoubtedly some of deep sincerity, but there are also others whose course is directed by political expediency. This being the case, it may go to either one of two extremes or directions; it may resolve itself into a *via media*; or it may fail altogether and give place to

another group if and when a powerful opposition becomes organized and vocal.

One often finds some evidence that the renewed attack on the Church in 1934 was, at least in part, in order to unify the government forces. It is constantly charged that the unifying of nationalistic with anti-church appeals is to divert the mind of the people and cover up the failure of the government to live up to its promises. Such policy as this, of course, is bound to be short-lived, for you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

In a conversation with the Secretary of Foreign Relations, His Excellency Sr. Portes Gil, I observed that, when the meaning of Socialistic teaching was discussed, members of the Cabinet and their associates had clearly differing conceptions as to what it meant. There appeared to be in the Cabinet and in the National Revolutionary Party men who are capitalists, others who are Communists, some avowed atheists and others affirming that they were not attacking religion, while in some cases we find in the same personality a combination of practical capitalist and theoretical Communist. I wondered how unity of policy and program could be continued in such a group.

His Excellency replied that he thought they had the same *ideologia* (a rather frequently occurring word the meaning of which often seems to be far from clear), and that they were guided by the same national Constitution; and he added: "According to my idea, the diversity of opinion on certain subjects on the part of the

members of the Cabinet is reconciled by the decision of the President himself, who secures a consistency of action in the different departments of his Government. Each of us who are members of the Government, has, or may have, ideas more or less advanced, but we are all agreed that the fundamental law of the country is the Constitution of 1917 and that it should be obeyed and carried into effect." It is a little difficult to see the force of this answer, especially in view of the fact that the Constitution is, more or less constantly, either changed by amendment or directed by new laws and regulations in order to adapt its provisions to the exigencies of the moment and even to make it comply with immediate and new theories.

In a conversation with me, a man thoroughly sympathetic with, and informed regarding the Government, said with great emphasis that it was, as much as any previous administration, if not more so, a minority Government. Its employees, he said, are still devout Roman Catholics, giving only outward loyalty to the Government. In his judgment, thus far the Church, though seemingly defeated, really had the upper hand. He added, however, "if this administration does not succeed in its policies and plans, it will be succeeded, in my judgment, by a Communist government more or less after the pattern of Soviet Russia. Its present undefined Socialism cannot last much longer." One sees evidence of confused thinking in the daily papers of Mexico City. In one column the Secretary of Agriculture will be quoted in terms of Communism or at least of ex-



treme Socialism, while an editorial in the same paper is headed: "The Government supports Capitalism."

It is extremely difficult to unravel all the allegations of personal complications within the Cabinet, including the alleged dictatorship of General Calles. No one knows with any certainty whether Calles is in active opposition to President Cárdenas, or whether President Cárdenas is attempting to displace Calles; or even whether both are pulling together, perhaps to dispose of some other Cabinet member. The difficulty is enhanced by the long illness and continued absence of General Calles. It is very evident that he has, however, selected the Cabinet and associated officials, including his sons and several relatives. There is probably a Calles group, a Cárdenas group and another group more or less associated with leading spirits in the National Revolutionary Party, while former President Rodríguez occasionally appears in the picture.

Within the party there appear clusters of powerful commercial men, politicians, leaders of the peasants, labor leaders, and officers of the army. It is not at all impossible that with leadership, the opposition to the Government might find allies among one or more of these groups. While of course the old *hacienda* element appears to be down and out, nevertheless it is still coherent and capitalistic and probably in sympathy with foreign capitalistic bodies and interests. I think that as my story proceeds there will be abundant evidence that this is a fair analysis, and indeed it was corroborated, after I had put it in the form of a memorandum, by

some political leaders who, without authorizing the use of their names, stated that it was correct.

One of the chief questions discussed is, of course, as to whether or not Mexico is on the way to Communism, or perhaps it would be better to say on the way to a combination of Communism and Fascism. One frequently sees the walls chalked with inscriptions: *Abajo fascismo! Abajo la Guerra! Viva Lenin!* Strange though it may seem, some of the friends I met expressed the fear that Communist agitators in the United States were the chief danger. So far as I can judge there is at the present time no significant Communist organization, although, as will be seen further on, there are indications of such in some quarters.

The main tendency towards this extreme is alleged to be found within the Government itself, many believing that Calles is experimenting more or less with the problem. Men who are at least moderately sympathetic with the Government expressed the belief that government agents have incited the recent strikes. It was declared by one of the men I interviewed that there had been more strikes in sixty days in two states of the Republic than in all its history and he added: "this at a time of unexampled prosperity." The general charge is that the Government starts the strikes and then settles them.

Shortly before I left Mexico City certain documents were handed to me, without any solicitation on my part, by reliable men who themselves believe them to be genuine. I am presenting them as indicating, regard-

less of their authenticity, at least the sort of underhand political manoeuvring that is going on in Mexico. These documents are photostats of letters, the alleged originals of which are in the hands of men whose names were given to me. The first purports to be a letter implicating the President of the Republic, by his *mayor official*, or chief of his secretarial staff. It is addressed to Hernan Laborde, a Communist leader. The translation is as follows:

(Envelope, with seal of the Republic of Mexico, and addressed to Sr. Maestro Hernan Laborde, Santa Veracruz 24, City.)

PRIVATE CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE

January 2, 1935  
2708

SEAL OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF  
MEXICO.

*President of the Republic*  
*Private Secretary*

MR. HERNAN LABORDE,  
CITY.

Dear Sir:

At a special meeting with the President of the Republic, he asked me to give you the following statement, in answer to your letter of December 26, 1934.

Mr. Arthur H. Villegas will turn over to you, weekly, the sum of \$2,000.00 (two thousand pesos) to help with

the expenses of your work of propaganda. You are to take care to attack our government, in order to disorientate the bourgeoisie, national as well as foreign, and especially the North Americans. As many strikes as possible should be provoked and fomented, in order to attain the Dictatorship of the Proletariat more rapidly. It is recommended that you take a very active part in the railroad and trolley strikes in this very capital. We should combat all known religions, very especially the Protestant and Roman Catholic, taking a census of the Knights of Columbus and members of the order of Guadalupe, in order to make it impossible for them to act, insofar as this may be possible, without consideration of any kind, and whatever the results may be. The members of your group should organize protest meetings against the so-called Borah and Higgins and Burklet propositions, denouncing Yankee imperialism in the face of international opinion, so that in Europe American intervention in Mexican affairs may be censured, taking as an example what is happening in unhappy Cuba.

We have received word from our Representative Agent in Soviet Russia, Comrade Lucio Cuesta, in which he advises us that our proletariat movement in the United States will be intensified this coming Spring, and we should support this from the boundary points of our northern frontiers.

It is of supreme importance to bring about the railroad strike by violent means, in order to take advantage of the alarm and discontent of the rural masses, and for this reason we should not find any opposition which might partially retard us in consolidating the new regime of the workers.

The trolley strike is another important factor in the capital, and must not be overlooked.

Permanent Secretary to the President

(Signed) J. Hernandez

JOSÉ HERNANDEZ DELGADO

Confidential Service of the Third International Communist of Moscow, Soviet Russia.

Order number 25780/date 1/

Charge upon the Bank of Mexico \$2,000.00 (TWO THOUSAND PESOS) weekly, payable to Arthur H. Villegas.

I was asked to compare the signature with one known to be genuine, and while, if a forgery, it is undoubtedly a remarkably good one, no handwriting expert would base a decision on a single signature. Information had been obtained at the bank, I was told on seemingly good authority, that the arrangement for the paying of the 2,000 pesos had actually been made.

I happened to notice in *La Prensa* of March 19th a reported address by Laborde, which appears to connect up with the alleged letter to him from the President's office. He eulogizes communism and describes Russia as the "great and prosperous fatherland of the world's proletariat". He hopes that the day is not far distant when the red flag, with its sickle and hammer, will float on all the palaces of the world, including the Castle of Chapultepec. He attacks the principal leaders of the National Revolutionary Party who he says "have betrayed thousands of country people who gave their blood for economic betterment" because they have sold national riches to the foreigner. He assails, in particular,

General Cárdenas, the President. He accuses the National Revolutionary Party of having hired gunmen to assassinate students, etc. He impugns the Commercial Oil Company because it is attempting, in complicity with high political leaders, to gain possession of 36,000,000 pesos belonging to the Eagle Company. He closes with an attack on groups of "red shirts" and upon Mexican clergy, especially Pascual Díaz, because the latter "is seeking the intervention of Yankee imperialists" in order to reconquer his power.

The other letter, it is claimed, is from the governor of the state of Vera Cruz. It is addressed to the president of the National Revolutionary Party:

*Private correspondence  
of the Governor of the  
State of Veracruz*

Jalapa Enriquez  
October 22, 1934

SENATOR COL. CARLOS RIVA PALACIO,  
PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY,  
MEXICO, D. F.

Comrade Senator Riva Palacio:

I am happy to advise you, by agreement with Comrade Governor of the state, Comrade Lawyer Gonzalo Vasquez Vela, that from the 14th to the 18th of the present month we held at Puerto Mexico, Veracruz, the Convention which our National Revolutionary Party ordered through you. There were present at that meeting Comrade Colonel Victorico R. Grajales, Governor of Chiapas, Lawyer Gonzalo Vasquez Vela, Governor

and agree with your instructions. Our slogan in the next Convention of the National Revolutionary Party will be "Rodolfo Elias Calles." Cardenism in this state has no importance. Some who are making a stir by order of Saturnino Cedillo, from San Luis, I am now proceeding to crush. I strongly urge, in the name of our interests and the establishing of the National Revolutionary Party, that you take strong measures to disarm the rabble of that knave Cedillo, since he never ceases to be a menace which must be annihilated, cost what it may.

This will advise you that work has now been begun in preparation for the appointment of COMRADE DEPUTY EVERARDO TOPE'TE as Governor in the next constitutional elections, and therefore our interests in Jalisco are fully guaranteed.

My affectionate greetings and respect to Chief General Calles and you, Senator, whom I shall have the high honor of visiting and greeting in your capital, next week.

(Signed) LIC. SEBASTIAN ALLENDE

*Private Correspondence of  
the Governor of the State*

Querétaro, Querétaro

October 9, 1934

SENATOR COL. CARLOS RIVA PALACIO,  
PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY.

My dear Senator:

At the Governor's request, I am advising you that the agreement between you and General Calles is of

supreme importance, and its very tactful realization will be the definite triumph of our cause.

There is nothing better, as a banner under which to attain the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, than the systematic attack upon the clergy and the Knights of Columbus and the members of the Order of Guadalupe, not forgetting the Catholic parishioners when necessary.

The persecution of these elements will impress the workers in our favor and will finish off in the most perfect manner our socialization task.

The Socialist School and Sexual Education will be magnificent auxiliaries in preparation.

In this Federated District, in accordance with your instructions, we now have many Knights of Columbus localized—a work of investigation which has been done with particular discretion and carefulness, and in due time, at any given moment, we can put our hands on them **TO CRUSH THEM AS THERE MAY BE NEED.**

Accept our sincere congratulations. We remain

Yours very truly,

(Signed) F. ZAPATA A.

FERNANDO ZAPATA ARJONA

The day after I received these documents, a statement appeared in the press from Sr. Portes Gil denying the genuineness of the letter from the office of President Cárdenas, especially mentioning the allegation that the Government fomented strikes. It may be stated that a tramway strike did take place on March 28th and, as will be recorded later on, several labor union officials expressed the opinion to me that it had



been incited by the Government. Sr. Portes Gil's repudiation, while clearing President Cárdenas, still leaves the possibility of treachery inside government circles.

A weekly newspaper entitled *Cristo Rey*, circulated mainly to support the Government's campaign against the Roman Catholic Church, and containing hideous caricatures of Jesus as well as of Archbishops and priests, represented in the issue of February 23rd two members of the Cabinet, with pickaxes, demolishing the two enemies of the Republic: the clergy and the bourgeoisie. Sr. Portes Gil told me that this paper was not authorized by the National Revolutionary Party but was issued by an independent group.\*

In the newspaper *Excelsior*, of March 15th, a long article stated that there was under consideration a world-wide strike to begin May 1st, and the headlines of the article were:

*Una Huelga Mundial a Iniciative de Mexicanos—  
Mayo 1*

("A World-wide Strike on the Initiative of Mexicans  
—May 1.")

Now of course all sorts of conjectures may be made with regard to these letters. There is a good deal in them that is dubious. Those who believe them genuine bring to bear a considerable amount of what might be called circumstantial evidence supporting their authen-

\* See page 272.

ticity. On the other hand, inasmuch as they date back two or three months, it is altogether possible that leaders opposed to the Government have brought out fraudulent photostats at a time when some of the events to which they refer were taking place. Some think they mean an attempt by President Cárdenas to overthrow General Calles and the rest of the Government and become a dictator with the support of the proletariat. Others suggest that their forgery and circulation were engineered by General Calles in order that he might step in again, as Herr Hitler alleged he had done in Germany, "to save the country." Indeed, one might surmise all kinds of possibilities of this sort.

If they represent anything authentic, it simply means an attempt from somewhere to set up a communistic government of the Soviet order. If on the other hand they have been forged and circulated by the opposition, there is evidence enough that it was done in order to get the Government into disrepute in Mexico, in the United States and elsewhere.

In any event, whatever their significance, they should interest the people of the United States. The feeling was expressed to me a good many times that recognition by the United States of succeeding revolutionary governments, and its support of them, had helped to develop an autocracy that was leading to a totalitarian dictatorship. I saw a copy of a letter written to Senator Borah by a woman of high standing, reminding him of the invasion of Mexico in 1849 and the Vera Cruz incident of 1916. The bookstore windows carry large

displays of "*Bolivarianismo Y Monroeismo*" by José Vasconcelos, and other similar books, along with a good deal of Marxian and communistic literature, more particularly on Lenin and other Soviet leaders.

The Borah resolution was received in various ways in Mexico. In areas sympathetic with the Government, of course, it was resented. Others have declared that its effect on the Government was to make it more moderate. *Cristo Rey* had a caricature in a recent issue with the caption: *Como castigará el Pueblo a los traidores que piden la Intervencion* ("The Way the People will punish Traitors who seek Intervention"). The picture showed the Mexican people as Justice and Reason, wringing the necks of Archbishop Díaz and another cleric. The same issue of this paper contained an amusing cartoon representing thousands of tourists from the United States, alleged to be "attracted" to Mexico by the assault of the Church and priests on the people of Mexico. Some labor union officers, not of the upper crust variety, however, but genuine workingmen, expressed the fear that Mexican Communists were at the present moment in close relationship with similar groups in the United States. Meanwhile, the National Revolutionary Party is reported as having taken, or as proposing to take, action against all foreigners who mix in politics or in any way attack or oppose the policies of the Government. There is even the occasional threat that all foreigners will be driven out of Mexico.

While I hesitate to express prophetic judgments, I am inclined to think that the political situation is likely

to remain about as it is for a considerable time, possibly with some revisions of the Cabinet. Whatever may be the feeling of resentment regarding the United States, there is no question but that the influence of the United States tends to restrain the execution of extreme measures, without, however, preventing their enactment. The chance of an administration such as this effecting permanent progress is obviously doubtful. While nationwide opposition to the Government and to its policy is still unorganized and feebly expressed, this opposition has latent potentiality; at the same time, a nation-wide sympathy with the Church, likewise unorganized and but weakly vocal, is ready to find expression and action if the occasion presents itself.

The masses of the people are being more and more brought into contact with the modern world and its thinking by newspapers, books, magazines and radio. They are becoming more rapidly informed. Chief among the causes of previous social discontent has been the enormous concessions to foreign interests, the possession of the land by the few and the rich and the inability of the people to articulate their wills and desires. These have been far more potent causes than the misuse of any power by the Church. The division of the land cannot as yet be regarded as having met with any appreciable success. Unless this Government accomplishes more than seems likely, there will be yet another re-formation, sooner or later.

Speaking in the most general terms possible, the chief impression is that of a lack of confidence in the Cabinet

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### III

## THE CHURCH IN MEXICO

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CHURCH sympathizers frequently said: "Now do not go too far back into history. Better estimate the Church as it has been for the last quarter of a century and as it is now." On the other hand, proponents of the Mexican Government would occasionally observe: "Just read history if you want to know the situation," and of course the Church might say the same thing of Mexican governments of recent years. As we shall see, the fact is that both affirm, claim and deny too much, with no coherent or recognizable public opinion to express reasonable judgment.

There is a great deal to be said for the Roman Catholic Church, especially regarding its early work in Mexico and during the last quarter of a century or more, while of the intervening centuries there is much that is very unhappy. Catholic and other historians, while admitting this, declare that, during all this time there have been periods of progress when the church has risen to relatively high planes and that there have always

been groups of high character. Whether this history constitutes adequate reason for crushing the Church or, still more, any cause for attacking religion in general, is another question.

The reader must not attempt to form judgments by comparing the Roman Catholic Church as it exists in the United States with what it is or has been in Mexico. On the other hand it is to be remembered that in Mexico a far more difficult task awaited the Church from the very beginning than in our own nation.

So far as the period of the Conquest is concerned, so unbiased a judge as Mexico's outstanding philosopher, Professor Antonio Caso, remarked not long ago that: "Everything good in Mexico goes back to the Franciscans." While this is obviously an overstatement, nevertheless it is not without a good deal of significance. Since independence was won in 1810 the Church has always been in difficulty with the Mexican State. Politically the Church has many times taken the wrong side when, if it had held itself above political conflict, it would have been saved much suffering.

When Mexico passed from under the rule of the Crown of Spain, the Church claimed to be the successor of the Crown, by act if not in theory. It has claimed practically complete responsibility for education and has refused to make itself amenable to the State. Over a long period the Government was feeble, while the Church constantly gained in power. The Church had a continuous and united hierarchy, while the State was always being upset. While the Church has used the

State for its purposes, it is perhaps equally true that the State has on many occasions availed itself of the influence of the Church. The result was that the Church either owned, or more or less directed the ownership of the country's capital. It will be said, of course, that political activity in the interest of good government could not be evaded by the Church. These considerations probably had a good deal to do with the massing of the churches in the larger centers, while in rural, and especially in remote districts, the people were neglected. In other words, the Church did become identified with and a part of the powerful wealthy classes.

It was unavoidable that the new politico-economic and social ideals which became prevalent about the time of the period of independence and which have constantly advanced should bring about the conflict which has continued ever since. Perhaps the most crucial moment came when the Revolution became a reality following the régime of Porfirio Díaz. Had the Church welcomed the Revolution at that period, history might have been written very differently. The fact is, however, that as a result of false steps, and also partly owing to intolerant governments, there are left to the Church today only two possessions: the hierarchy (which exists more in name than in fact) and, as we shall observe later on, the religious allegiance of at least three-fourths of the people as a whole. As is frequently the case in Catholic populations, however, the distinction between nominal Catholics and practicing Catholics is difficult to determine. It might be observed

that even in the United States, when the Protestant churches get out their Year Books that distinction is never made.

During the past seventy-five years the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico has been increasingly deprived and dispossessed of its property and of its temporal powers, sometimes justifiably and sometimes unjustifiably. This raises the question whether or not, if it is simply the institution known as the Roman Catholic Church that the Government is bent on subduing, there is any necessity for the ruthless measures of the present administration in Mexico. It is somewhat difficult to see how the Church in its present feeble state can exercise any appreciable direct political influence, in view of the method by which governmental candidates are elected.

The present laws governing the Church go back to the Constitution of 1857. While the original Constitution contained the severest sort of enactments, that of 1917 went about as far beyond them as one could possibly conceive. It is interesting to note that while the original Constitution had a preamble beginning: "In the name of God and by the authority of the Mexican People," this was deleted in the Constitution of 1917. The expansion of both laws and penalties in this later Constitution indicates the determination of the present revolutionists. Indeed, the extent to which they go into detail is hardly consistent with a document of this kind.\*

\* The American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico has published the two constitutions in parallel columns, a study of which will indicate the extent to which the present revolution has gone beyond that of 1857. This translation is better than the supposedly authorized one used in this volume.



Still further, the Constitution of 1917 has been amended so extensively from time to time that, in order really to understand the limitations imposed upon religious institutions in Mexico, one would need to gather together all the laws and regulations purporting to carry out the intent of the original instrument. To these, reference will be made in a later chapter.

The articles bearing upon the Roman Catholic Church, and the other churches and religious institutions as well, are as follows:

EXCERPTS\* FROM THE PERTINENT ARTICLES IN  
THE CONSTITUTION OF 1917:

"Article 3. No religious body, nor a minister of any religious sect, will be allowed to establish or direct schools of primary education."

"Article 5. The State cannot authorize any contract, pact or agreement which has for its object the loss or the irrevocable sacrifice of the liberty of man, whether through the cause of labor, education, or religious vow. The law, in consequence, prohibits the establishment of monastic orders of any denomination, whatever may be the object they pretend to have in view."

"Article 27, II. Religious societies, known as churches, of any belief whatsoever, may under no circumstances acquire, possess, or administer real estate or properties, nor mortgages on same; those which they now have, either in their own names or in that of a third person will pass to the dominion of the Nation, and it will be the duty of every person to denounce to

\* These excerpts are from an English translation issued in 1926 by the American Book and Printing Co., Mexico, D. F.

the Government any properties known to belong to the churches. Strong presumptive proof will be sufficient to declare the denouncement well-founded. The temples destined for public worship are the property of the Nation, represented by the Federal Government, who will designate which should continue being set aside for the purpose mentioned. The bishoprics, curacies, seminaries, asylums or schools kept up by religious societies, convents, or any other building which may have been constructed or intended for the administration, propagation or teaching of any religion, will immediately pass, by inherent right, to the public service of the Nation, to be destined exclusively to the public service of the Nation or of the States under their respective jurisdictions. The temples of public worship erected in future, will be the property of the Nation."

"Article 37, III. The quality of Mexican citizenship is lost by compromise, before a minister of a religious sect, or before any other person, by those who do not observe the present Constitution or the laws which emanate therefrom.

"Article 55, VI. A deputy of Congress may not be a minister of any religious sect."

"Article 59. The requisites of a senator are the same as those of a deputy."

"Article 82. The President . . . may not belong to an ecclesiastical body nor be a minister of any religious sect."

"Article 130. Only the Federal authorities may exercise in matters of religious worship and outward forms, such intervention as the law authorizes. All other officials shall act as auxiliaries to the Federation. Congress may not enact any law establishing or pro-

hibiting any religion whatsoever. Marriage is a civil contract. This and all other acts relating to the civil status of individuals shall appertain to the exclusive jurisdiction of the civil authorities in the manner and form fixed by law, and they shall have the force and validity given them by such laws. A simple promise to tell the truth and comply with the obligations assumed shall subject the person doing so in case of failure to fulfill said obligation, to the penalties established by law. The law recognizes no corporate existence in the religious associations known as churches. Ministers of religious creeds are considered as persons exercising a profession and are directly subject to the laws governing same. Only the state Legislatures may determine the maximum number of ministers of religious creeds, according to the needs of each locality. It is necessary to be a Mexican by birth in order to be a minister of any religious creed in Mexico. Ministers of religious creeds may not, either in public or private meetings, or in acts of worship or religious propaganda, criticize the fundamental laws of the country, particularly the authorities, or the Government in general; they will have no vote, will not be eligible to office, and may not assemble for political purposes.\* Permission must be obtained from the Department of the Interior, after the opinion of the Governor of the State in question has been heard, in order to open new temples of worship for public use. There shall be a caretaker in each place of worship, charged with its care and responsible to the authorities for the proper performance of the laws on religious observances within such place of worship and for all the objects belonging to same. The caretaker of each temple, in conjunction with ten citizens of the

place, will promptly advise the municipal authorities as to the person in charge of said temple. The outgoing minister, in company with the incoming minister and ten citizens of the place, shall give notice to the authorities of any change. The municipal authorities, under penalty of dismissal and fine of one thousand pesos for any breach, will be responsible for compliance with this provision; and subject to the same penalty they shall keep a register of the temples and another of the caretakers. They shall likewise advise the Department of the Interior through the state Governor of any permission to open to the public use a new temple, as also any change in the caretakers. Personal donations may be received in the interior of the temples. Studies carried on in institutions devoted to the professional training of ministers of religious sects may under no circumstances be ratified or be granted any other dispensation or privilege which has for its purpose the ratification of such studies in official courses. Any authority violating this disposition shall be criminally responsible and all such dispensation of privilege be null and void and shall invalidate entirely the professional degree for the obtaining of which the infraction of this provision may in any way have contributed. Periodical publications, which either by reason of their programs, titles, or merely by their general tendencies are of a religious character, may not comment upon any of the political affairs of the union, nor publish any information regarding the acts of the authorities of the country or of private individuals, if the latter have to do with public affairs. Any political association whose name bears any word or indication relating to any religious belief, is strictly prohibited. No meetings of a political character

may be held within temples. A minister of any religious sect may not inherit on his own behalf, nor by means of a trustee or otherwise, any real property occupied by any association of religious propaganda, or for religious or charitable purposes. Ministers of religious sects are legally disqualified to inherit by will from ministers of the same sect, or from any other person to whom they are not related by blood within the fourth degree. All real and personal property pertaining to the clergy or to religious institutions, in so far as their acquisition by private persons is concerned, will be governed by the provisions of Article 27 of this Constitution. The infraction of any of the preceding provisions will never be the subject of a trial by jury."

In Chapter VI will be found extracts from laws issued in 1926 amending the penal code provisions respecting religious institutions. The completeness to which these provisions have been carried out may be indicated by the following tabulation of the churches in Mexico as of March 15, 1935, furnished by the office of the Archbishop:

States	Area (K <sup>ms</sup> )	Inhabitants	Approx. No. of Priests	
			Previously	At Present
Aguascalientes . . . .	6,472	108,628	200	2
Baja California ..	144,094	92,031	3	0
Campeche . . . . .	77,826	76,509	9	0
Coahuila ... ..	150,395	466,236	50	5
Colima .... ..	5,205	109,016	150	0
Chiapas . . . . .	14,415	464,240	30	0
Chihuahua . . . . .	245,612	465,148	50	0
Distrito Federal ..	1,483	1,131,875	400	25
Durango .... ..	123,520	352,519	150	2
Guanajuato . . . . .	30,585	869,519	200	?
Guerrero . . . . .	64,458	628,646	25	0

States	Area (K'ms)	Inhabitants	Approx. No. of Priests	
			Previously	At Present
Hidalgo . . . . .	20,884	646,286	100	5
Jalisco . . . . .	80,684	1,222,647	800	29
México . . . . .	21,400	900,021	150	34
Michoacán. . . . .	60,033	955,331	620	33
Morelos . . . . .	4,964	111,132	35	8
Nayarit . . . . .	27,053	167,539	90	5
Nuevo León . . . . .	65,103	346,360	100	?
Oaxaca . . . . .	94,211	1,009,677	167	1
Puebla . . . . .	33,995	1,039,375	400	23
Querétaro . . . . .	11,480	299,415	150	2
San Luís Potosí . . . . .	63,241	473,046	100	56
Sinaloa . . . . .	58,488	375,524	50	0
Sonora . . . . .	182,553	312,015	30	0
Tabasco . . . . .	26,094	245,419	12	0
Tamaulipas . . . . .	83,594	321,499	40	0
Tlaxcala . . . . .	2,027	182,832	(included in Puebla)	
Veracruz . . . . .	71,896	1,184,913	182	0
Yucatán. . . . .	61,976	381,415	50	0
Zacatecas . . . . .	72,843	391,762	150	0
			4,493	230+

Exactitude is out of the question as Mexican statistics are seldom reliable and there are constant changes by the State authorities. These figures show over one hundred less priests than were unofficially reported in January. The total of 230 would probably be considerably increased were the figures for Nuevo León and Guanaajuato added. The numbers are, on the whole, being reduced at the time of writing.\*

As an example of the extreme cases, the following enactment of one of the states indicates how the provisions of the Constitution are being interpreted by regional authorities:

\* The latest (unverified) report, May tenth, is that there are now but about 200.

"Decree #9, State of Colima; published in *El Estado de Colima* (official publication of the state) of November 24, 1934:

Article 1. Only one minister of each religious sect may officiate in the state of Colima.

Article 2. The Executive of the state is authorized to issue new regulations of religious worship, in accordance with the provisions of this decree.

This Decree shall be effective from the date of its publication."

"Regulations issued by the Governor of Colima under above Decree, published in *El Estado de Colima* of December 8, 1934:

Article 1. Only ministers authorized by Law, who have complied with the requirements provided by the Law, may carry on their vocations in the state; but religious ceremonies of each sect must be held only in the capital and only in authorized places, which shall be under the constant vigilance of the authorities.

Article 2. Ministers must establish their status as caretakers of churches before the corresponding Municipal Authority and must register their appointment with the Municipal Government in order to secure their credentials; they must be married according to Civil Law, must be at least fifty years of age, and pay the tax upon professionals."

While the response of the Church to these laws and enactments will appear later on, we may at this point

say frankly that the Hierarchy has been defiant of them. The Hierarchy declined to accede to the provision for the registering of priests, and an organization known as the "National League for Defence of Religious Liberty," formed in 1926, urged a boycott to include all newspapers, luxuries, the use of vehicles and utilities and houses of amusement. The Catholic people were advised not to send their children to lay schools. While this organization was composed of laymen, its measures were doubtless approved by the Archbishop and by the Bishops. The clergy was ordered to keep away from the churches, and a guerilla warfare began which continued for a considerable period of time.

There is much criticism of the Church for having closed the churches to the people in 1926. It has been regarded in some quarters as having weakened its case. Many feel that had the Church not been *intransitable* and *intransigent* during the régime of President Obregón and at other times it might have retained much of its power. There are also those who say that the Hierarchy has had more recent opportunities of the same nature. That, however, is less apparent.

In 1929 a joint announcement was made by President Portes Gil and Archbishop Ruiz that an accord had been reached between Church and State. Priests were not required to be registered unless in charge of property. While religious instruction in the schools was prohibited, teaching within "church confines" was permitted. Church members were also given the right to present petitions for amendment, repeal, or passage of



the laws. It was in connection with his service in drawing up the agreement that Bishop Pascual Díaz was made Archbishop of Mexico. In this connection the United States happily exercised a new kind of intervention, through the sympathetic and gracious personality of the late Dwight W. Morrow. Had Ambassador Morrow remained this desirable compact might have developed into a permanent understanding, as he had the confidence of both parties to it.

As to which party to this convention broke its conditions, there is grave dispute. While there seems to be little doubt that both have broken it, the question still remains as to which of the two initiated the process. There is, I judge, no question but that the Vatican has been directing the course of the Church in Mexico. Archbishop Díaz has made statements indicating that this is the case. Indeed there are some indications that the Archbishop and the Papal Delegate are not in entire accord on policies and measures.

One is naturally interested to know the effect of Roman Catholic agitation in the United States upon the Mexican situation. I believe that it has done good to the Church in Mexico in so far as it affected public opinion. To the extent that it has sought to bring political pressure to bear, I should say that it had done harm to the Mexican Church. How far the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has helped the Mexican Church during all these troubled years is open to question. There has been of course friendly personal intervention at times, but the question raises itself as to

whether this situation might have prevailed if, beginning with earlier days and continuing both in times of prosperity and adversity, there had been closer co-operation, counsel and advice between the Church in the United States and that in Mexico.

As it is, the Church has almost lost its existence—except so far as the partial use of church buildings by the people is concerned—over a large portion of Mexico. Up to the present time its protests and its alleged violations of legislation have simply brought one reprisal after another. One thing, however, has thus far endured, and that is, the courage and determination of the Church that it will not yield to the requirements of the public school system and its allegedly rationalistic education. It has excommunicated, at least to a large extent, all members who have acted otherwise. That it has, in short, defied the Constitution of the land, there is no question. Again, whether or not this justifies the course of the State is still another matter. Later on we shall find each side stating its case for itself.

Of course, the charges made by the extreme anti-clericals are recklessly exaggerated. The revolutionists talk piously about the exploitation of the poor while at the same time they divide property or permit it to be divided among politicians and generals. While the Church has secured money by undue pressure, the politicians have simply stolen it outright. The constantly repeated charge that the Church is exercising temporal power stands upon very feeble grounds at the present time. Punishment is meted out to priests but we hear

nothing about any reprisals upon dishonest politicians. Representatives of the State talk a great deal about the Constitution, while many others, though not openly defying it as the Church has done, nevertheless violate it.

On the other hand, as we have indicated, the Church has used other than spiritual weapons; to a great extent its own procedures have brought it into its present condition. Had the Church begun earlier and carried out farther its more recent and present plans for social reform, the result might have been very, very different.

One thing should be said with decision. While Adolf Hitler succeeded in dividing the German Evangelical Church, the Mexican government appears to have entirely failed in its effort to develop a so-called "Schismatic" church, and the leaders of the Church in Mexico have shown a splendid courage which has had no small influence in holding the people loyal to their religious institutions.

Whatever may have been the errors of these men in prosperity, they have shown themselves equal to these days of adversity.

Meanwhile, with many of its priests deported, many more in hiding, while the people are flocking to the churches, there is a commendable movement to develop the service of laymen in carrying on the service of the Church, which may ultimately help solve some of the problems. Further observation on the theme of this chapter will be continued in Chapters V, VI and VII.

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#### IV

### EDUCATION: THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

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I RECALL how deeply impressed I was in 1922 when José Vasconcelos, with his characteristic enthusiasm, presented the plans of the Federal Department of Public Education which had been created the year before. They were constructive, and Vasconcelos expressed no sense of opposition to the Church schools at that time. If I recall rightly, the general feeling was that they were needed.

The only objection he voiced, so far as the Church was concerned, was to its tendency to attack the system of public schools. In fact, I believe that at one time there was a proposal that the Church and the Government should cooperate in carrying out the Government's program. As we shall see in the course of our study, the Church itself had begun a moderately socialistic or social program several years before.

With this background, it was deeply interesting to note the progress that has been made in provision for

public education, more particularly its penetration into rural and other remote regions of the country, thus inducing a unity between various elements of the population formerly more or less separated. It seems unfortunate that Vasconcelos, now exiled (as the result of his campaign for the presidency), has not been continued in office to develop the educational system with the ideals which he set forth to me in 1922 for the education of the masses, including the Indians. I recall his recital of some of the difficulties which he stressed: the overcoming of prejudices and suspicions, and the poverty of the State.

He looked forward to the development of the university and the bringing of that agency into the stimulation of the whole system. I remember also the later service, in the Department of Public Education, of Moisés Sáenz, who has been for many years active among the Protestant churches. The present tendency to federalize the educational work in rural districts would seem to be promising if competent direction is maintained in the Federal District. While, as we shall see, there are many difficulties in the carrying out of the original program, nevertheless one finds in some distant communities a loyalty to the school equal to, if not exceeding, that to the Church. This is due in large measure, to the fact that the school teacher is constant, while in some remote districts the priest has been an occasional visitor.

I was told by a member of the Cabinet that the largest

item in the governmental budget today is for education. This would be an example for the whole world, provided, as I have said before, the education were wisely directed. While thus far the Government, in view of all the difficulties, has already done a fine piece of work in many sections, and although one sees splendid buildings and the development of normal schools in some cities, the fact remains that as yet not more than 50% of the children are in schools. There has been altogether too much haste; unnecessary conflicts have been aroused and parents have taken their children out of the schools. This has been the case with some of the Government's own employees. As there was no apparent intention in 1922 to dispose of the private schools, it is to be assumed that the anti-Church and anti-religious conflict has been the cause of what has happened since. After I saw some of the schools in rural sections, and more particularly in one almost primitive Indian village, I could but wish that public education had not become so confused through rash and precipitate action.

I secured the multitudinous regulations of the Constitution, but space forbids including them in this volume. Those relating to private schools will be found in the preceding chapter.

Article III of the Constitution now reads as follows:

"1. Education imparted by the State will be socialistic, and furthermore will exclude all religious doctrines and combat fanaticism and prejudices, and toward this end the school will organize its teachings and activities

so as to imbue in the young a rational and exact concept of the universe and of social life.

"2. Only the State federation, States, municipalities shall impart primary, secondary or normal education. Authority may be granted private individuals who desire to impart education in any of these grades, but always subject to the following norm:

"(a) The activities and teachings of private schools must follow, without any exception whatever, the precepts of the first paragraph of this article."

His Excellency Ignacio García Téllez, Secretary of Education, graciously gave me more than an hour of his time, during which he set forth the ideal and plans of his Department with contagious enthusiasm. There was almost a touch of fanaticism in his emphases. Later on, following a conference with President Cárdenas, I received the following letter, translated verbatim:

*"Secretario de Educacion*

*Publica, Mexico*

Marzo 26 de 1935

"SR. CHARLES S MACFARLAND, PH.D., LL.D.,  
CLUB AMERICANO.

"Distinguished Sir:

"Through instructions of the President of the Republic, I am sending you herewith copies of the Six-Year Plan, of the Program of Education as outlined by the just-mentioned Mandatory, and pamphlets which contain declarations of the First Magistrate, the Thesis of the Secretary of Education and Decrees expedited as preliminaries of the Educative Reform.

"From all these you will be able to understand that

with the new text of Article Third of the Constitution, a new step has been made in popular culture, in relation with the historic periods of our Education. These were: theocratic in the period before the conquest; overpowered by religious dogma during the colonial period, and until the time of the separation of the church and the State by the Reform Laws; predominantly positivist in the official establishments and theological in the private schools during the Porfirio Díaz regime. With the publication of the Constitution of 1917, the State set forth the lay teaching, limiting the ascendancy of the clergy, who under the protection of liberty, mutilated the intelligence of childhood, imposing traditional dogmas which were contrary to scientific progress, and to the principles of the political, economic and moral emancipation of the masses. With the Reform of the above mentioned precept of the Constitution, the public power recovered fully the guidance of childhood and youth, permitting them to create a rational concept of the universe and of the social life, repelling the imposition of all religious doctrine by the instructors, in order to substitute, for fanaticism and social prejudices, scientific truth.

"When the Constitution set forth that the teaching which the State imparts shall be Socialist, the revolution completed its economic, human and cultural work, proclaiming the social function of education, with the same right that it (the Revolution) sustained the social function of property when it proclaimed in its Magna Carta the just distribution of land and the just compensation of effort for millions of workers.

"In the contents of the program and projects attached hereto, your learned spirit of an investigator will find



delineated the motives by which the Revolutionary Government concedes the transcendence of educative service, defines the objects of socialistic orientation, and plans its development, basing itself on national reality, but not thus disowning the contemporary philosophic movement, nor failing to take advantage of the conquests of modern education.

"With what has just been set forth it will be seen that our plan or system of public education is inspired in our traditions, in the basic postulates of the social reform and in the economic realities of our life.

"I trust that your broadminded preparation and your desire to understand our social movements with the spirit of sincere friendship, will help you to judge with sympathy the generous efforts of our great leaders.

"I remain your attentive and faithful servant,

(Signed) "IGNACIO GARCÍA TÉLLEZ"

It was evident from our conversation that the Secretary of Public Education had some realization of the effect of the so-called Socialistic teaching on public opinion in the United States. Regarding the question as to whether or not this Socialistic education is also rationalistic and atheistic, I ought to say that a close friend of the Secretary of Education, who does not himself approve of Socialistic education, told me, with decision, that Sr. Téllez is not an atheist or atheistically inclined.

The Secretary of Foreign Relations, Sr. Portes Gil, also greatly emphasized the educational program in connection with the Government's Six-Year Plan. He said in part:

"One of the fundamental purposes of the President of the Republic is to establish during the present period of six years 8,000 additional rural schools, of which 2,000 should be opened this year. Adding this 8,000 to the 8,000 that are already established by the Federation, there will be 16,000, which is more than the number which exists in the different states. According to the statistics which have been gathered, Mexico needs at present some 25,000 more schools in order to care for the needs of the rural population; and therefore it is the purpose of the present administration to open at least 16,000 schools before this period is up.

"The budget of the Secretary of Education is at the present time 40,000,000 pesos, and it is proposed that by 1939 it shall be at least 40% of the total budget of the country."

It appears to be most distressing that the Government precipitately closed good schools before they were ready to provide either teachers or equipment to take their places, so that even without the tendency of the Church to boycott the public schools, multitudes of children would be without education. Indeed, that is one of the things that is most disquieting: this Government is trying to do everything all at once. This comes hardest on the poor children, inasmuch as the well-to-do Catholics and critics of the school system will send their children to the United States to be educated.

The so-called Socialistic teaching is at the same time largely embarrassed by minor inspectors of the Department of Public Education who visit the schools and

endeavor to impose their own particular religious or anti-religious views upon both teachers and scholars. Meanwhile all kinds of opposition to this teaching has arisen. For example, among the publications of the Mexican Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation I found an article presenting extremely critical views.

Among the several States one discovers almost unimaginable stupidities, for example: in Puebla, according to the press, the State authorities announced that parents need not send their children to the state schools but that fines of one peso to twenty pesos a day would be imposed upon them if they did not! Careful observers feel that there is a lack of the definite moral standards among the school teachers which the Church maintained. On the other hand, one finds a good deal of idealism on the part of those teachers in the public school system who are imbued with a new sense of dedication and responsibility.

Now as to the Socialistic teaching, two questions arose to which I found it impossible to secure adequate answers, viz.: Did it confine itself to a general or is it a particular political-social philosophy? Is its attack on the Church purely institutional; or, is it a form of Socialism which is distinctively anti-religious and atheistic? As a matter of fact I found few people prepared to define Socialistic teaching. In conversation with Sr. Portes Gil I called attention to the fact that no one could object to education which would root out superstition, and I asked him whether or not the word *racional* in the phrase: "rational conception of the universe"

meant simply reasonable, or, rationalistic? He felt pretty sure that the English word would be "reasonable." I rather think, however, that on this point some members of his Cabinet would not agree with His Excellency. Even when the term "scientific Socialism" was used, it was very difficult to find out just what it meant. Sr. Portes Gil put it to me this way:

"The reform of Article 3 of the Constitution establishing Socialistic teaching in this country, the text being approved by the National Congress and in accord with the discussions on this theme, includes in my opinion two fundamental questions:

"In the first place it gives to the teaching rationalist (*racionalista*) orientation with the purpose that the School shall accustom the pupils to explain scientifically the phenomena of nature. The carrying out of this object imposes upon those charged with imparting knowledge the duty of freeing the minds of the pupils from the prejudices which, as a social inheritance from past generations, have been conserved as an arbitrary explanation of the phenomena of the Universe and are without any scientific basis.

"The second object of the reform tends to create in children sentiments and ideas of human fraternity, and moral and economic rehabilitation of the society of today, in order that they may envisage a better organized community; and that they may learn to correct the irritating inequalities at present existing in Mexico, according to the provisions of the Revolutionary laws

of the country and practically through the dispositions of Articles 27 and 123 of the General Constitution of the Republic.

"The establishment of the Socialistic school in Mexico depends upon the social and peculiar ideals of the Revolutionary movement, which has endeavored to care for the necessities of the present social life in Mexico. The reform of Article 3 does not contain any atheistic propositions. The practice of religion is left to the home and to the ministers of the different churches or religions, all of whom are officially authorized by the general constitution.

"But the reform of Article 3 implies the necessity of combating prejudices and falsities which have been transmitted from generation to generation, fostering the ignorance of our humble classes so that conscienceless people may exploit them inhumanly."

Portes Gil constantly declares in one form or another that the government's Socialistic education does not turn the mind of the child against religion. The confusion multiplies as one travels among the States. For instance, while, broadly speaking, I found the state of Jalisco and its government taking a very moderate course, so far as the churches were concerned, the report of its recently retired governor contained the following sentence:

"Another one of the aspects of the tasks of the teachers, at the present moment, is very important if it is considered that Socialistic education does not stop at teaching to read, write and count; it should also fight

rejudices and fanaticisms by forming groups—anti-clerical *and anti-religious*.” (Italics mine.)

In continuing the search for an understandable definition I called upon one of the technical advisers of the Department of Education who was particularly charged with dealing with religious questions and who is issuing a series of six documents on religion. I asked him point-blank whether or not he and his associates in the anti-church and anti-clerical program meant to substitute a rationalistic, mechanistic, and humanistic conception of the universe in place of a spiritual interpretation, and he answered: “For myself, I take the mechanistic and humanistic view.” In this connection I might add that I was educated in a university in the United States.

In conversation with an official of the Department of Public Education who happened also to be a scientist, I asked him how long it was since science had admitted and declared that we had arrived at an “exact” conception of the universe.\* He assented to my implied criticism and intimated that he might propose an amendment to Article III to the Department, smilingly acquiescing in my observation that perhaps this article was written when the writer was very busy.

I was able to gather a good many personal opinions from thoughtful people. One man long associated with educational work says that the intention is evidently to prohibit all teaching of religion. While it is left to the families to give religious instruction, it is perfectly well

\* See page 80.

known that the great majority of the families in Mexico are not competent to give it adequately to their children.

In fact, an outstanding professional man said that three kinds of teaching were going on: the educational program as initiated and conducted among the states, that of the Government's Department of Education, and a third kind which he called the "program of a group within the Government" and which is plain out-and-out Communism and atheism. Therefore, by the recent regulations of the Government, education is unable to pursue a steady course but changes as one group after another succeeds to government control. Meanwhile, concluded my informant, no public opinion can be formed when a Government prohibits such by continuously setting class over against class. Others took the ground that while they deplored anti-religious teaching, they did not see how the educational power of the Church could be broken except by prohibiting all religious teaching, inasmuch as the Roman Catholic Church's idea of religion was the only one known in Mexico.

A good deal of opposition has been shown on the part of both parents and teachers to the sex teaching which is part of the Government's program, not so much perhaps because of the teaching itself, but because of the crude way in which it was sensationally announced by a former Secretary of Public Education. Thoughtful men and women, including Catholics, liberals and teachers, felt that the Church was wise in its attitude of restraint and careful supervision in the matter of sex

teaching, in view of the temperament of the people and the climate of the country.

Practically all of the teachers whom I met in various parts of Mexico expressed more or less scorn and contempt for Garrido Cánabal, the Secretary of Agriculture, and his views on education and on social theories in general. Even one of the present inspectors of schools said that as a rule, where the Roman Catholic schools had been good, it would be a long time before the schools replacing them would come anywhere near reaching their standard. One particularly clear-minded teacher believed that the socialist teaching would formulate itself in time and would, as a matter of fact, be very simple. She had no fear so far as religion was concerned, for she believed that the people would retain their spiritual ideals even if the Church were gone.

A devoutly Catholic teacher felt that the old system of church schools, as it had been carried on, was better for the rich, but that the poor were not able to send their children to the church schools. She was sorry that the Church had been so slow and negligent. In her school there had been no suggestion of any atheistic teaching or influence. The question of separation between education and politics came out frequently and one official said that good teachers had been lost to the schools when those who refused to participate in a public manifestation of sympathy with the Government had been dropped from the system. Teachers in the Federal District claimed for the most part that they have not been interfered with so far as any



imposition of Godless teaching was concerned, and when they were shown some of the pledges as used in other states (to be referred to later), they declared that they would refuse to sign anything of the kind.

I secured several of the textbooks and teaching programs of the schools. While they contain some very idealistic material, there are two distinct elements in most of them: a tendency to set class against class, more particularly, of course, the poor against the rich, and anti-Church or anti-religious slants, or both. There are official "teaching pamphlets," some of them by men said to be at least communistically inclined, on such questions as: "Proletarian Art and Literature." Indeed, one observes a tendency to impel anything like an artistic and cultural renaissance in the direction of political programs. If we may judge by the first issue, the series of documents on religion are likely to be written from the viewpoint of scientific materialism, although the writer of them declared that they would not be anti-religious but simply "irreligious" or "unreligious."

Considerable protest was being made by teachers and parents, including many who were manual workers, against a series of school readers entitled: *Coleccion Escolar Socialista; Libertate*. When I brought this to the attention of the Secretary of Public Education he told me that these books would be withdrawn to consider the question of revision. The following are some excerpts from one of these readers:

"Sometimes I go to the library: what a beautiful building! Formerly it was a church, but now books take

the place of the saints and I believe that that is better. Books do us good service."

"Yesterday my mother went into a church and sacrificed ten centavos of her house money for a candle. I tried to make her see this useless expense, it would have been more reasonable to buy a candle in order to make light for US."

"Mama believes that the strike can be settled by prayers. If the boss knew this, how he would laugh! Then mother 'confessed' and told the priest all about the strike. The curate is not in our situation and, as he does not know the indignity of being paid a miserable salary, and since he has never worked with his hands, he counselled my mother, RESIGNATION and to bear everything in the LOVE OF GOD. A beautiful formula. Very convenient. But it did not convince my father.

"If the owner throws you out: 'resign thyself'

"If the boss fires you: 'resign thyself'

"If the boss kills you with hunger: 'resign thyself.'

"And all for the love of God, who permits the bosses to exploit the workingman. This is all that a man who is called a shepherd of souls and who gives his hand hypocritically to be kissed, could counsel. I am going to find a more practical formula."

"When thou takest up the rifle, may it be to put an end to all those who even yet exploit us."

"The church lifts the spire of its white bell-tower in the center of the town. It was built many years ago, when the Spanish Conquest instilled in the Indians the LOVE OF GOD. Even yet there is left much of this fear, the Indians even yet bow before its walls and its priests.

"At first sight the church appears poor, but if one takes into account the misery of the surrounding huts, it is sumptuous. Altars, wax tapers, hangings, laces, indicate that its tribute is very large.

"Every Sunday, the field hands leave in the collection plates the pennies that have escaped the vigilance or avarice of the manager of the Company store.

"The curate, fat and spectacled, eats in the big house.

"Whenever a workingman protests because of the excess of work put upon him or because he finds that he has been robbed in the store, he is taken before the Farm Manager in order that he may settle him; this man is an escaped jail prisoner who knows how to apply very 'convincing' methods, but when the worker continues in his protest, he is sent to the priest. The latter, affable and smiling, arrives at the hut of the worker, he talks to him of heaven, of the souls in purgatory, of the power of excommunication, of the meek and the humble of heart, and the peon has to give in and let the owners continue to rob him of his wages. **BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS HIS!**

"And the priest, not content with neutralizing the rebellion of the working men, fills the children with the poison of servility at the hour of catechism. Primary school? There never was one."

"We carry on our faces our hate, which is the hunger of the world.

"We are the force that destroys everything, in order to create everything.

"Let us shake the planet from pole to pole. Let us wipe out the last human grief."

Another school reader is entitled *Orientacion* (a catchword in political circles is "orientation," or, as it is sometimes put, "reorientation," as a sort of description of the revolution). In it are the following passages:

"There is no money in our house, neither is there any comfort. We are honest workers and we know how to work, but all our gain enriches the boss and we ourselves have only a pitiful wage. I am the son of a workman and it is a great satisfaction to me to earn my bread with my hands and not live as the boss.

"I love my father and mother because they earn their living with much effort although they are shamefully robbed by the capitalists.

"Many years have the farmers been working for the owner who does not even know his own lands nor can he count his cattle."

"Joseph Melquiades.—They put in jail the Indian Joseph Melquiades in order to take away from him the lands which showed traces of ore. As he did not know how to read they showed him a thousand papers they made out, the official documents of judicial usages. Joseph Melquiades does not read; there are no schools on the ranch and the priest teaches only the children of the owner. 'Why should you learn to read, José,' said the priest. 'Learn to take care of the cows and to sow sugar cane. When you wish to make up your accounts go to the owner, who will give you a record from the Company's store.'

"Joseph found in a distant hill some stones which shone like the imprisoned sun. He went directly to the confession box; he told the priest what he had seen and he showed him the metals. The owner knew of it imme-

diately; they put Joseph in jail. Long papers were written which were signed by false witnesses. Joseph came out of the jail under the custody of soldiers who compelled him to show the golden vein of metals. There in the mountains they did away with him; nothing was heard of him again. The owner became very rich and the curate as well, I understand.

"Poor José Melquiades!—If he had known how to read, perhaps he could have defended his rights."

"Hurry up, little horse, hurry up! We are going to escape from the rent collector who gets the rent. We will go away on horseback where he cannot see us."

"It was the time of the slaves. The owner of a large farm had a hundred slaves to work the land, a hundred slaves to cut down the trees on the hills, and a hundred slaves to extract the gold from the mines. While the owner lived in abundance his slaves were hungry and had no clothing. One of the workmen asked permission to plant one grain of corn; and this was granted. Later, when the owner saw that this grain of corn had produced several ears, which, being planted in their turn covered a large extent of land, he was greatly surprised. The owner said he never would have believed that the land could produce so much. The man who had sown the corn said: 'Because you have never worked with your hands and have no love for the land. The land knows how to be grateful and return to those who sow it 100 to one. Now you see the results.'

"But the owner, as all the bosses, did not wish to work and left his lands in the hands of his slaves whom he punished without pity. The slaves revengefully did not take care of the land, which kept its best harvests for the time when it would be cared for with love.

"The working people united. Let us go against Capital. The owner of riches is given to exploiting men in his factories who are compelled to work there. The owners do not pay just wages and make the men work so long that there comes a day that notwithstanding that the men are strong they end by becoming sick.

"When the peon went to war it was in order that he might regain the land which the boss had stolen from him.

"The beautiful buildings which are almost as high as the clouds are an insult to the poor houses in our ward. The churches also uselessly lift up their towers next to the shambles where live the poor.

"The bosses like child labor. They know that they can pay it with a few cents and that the children will suffer and do not know how to protest.

(Part of the story of an apprentice who fell off the roof of a house.) "The bosses did not feel sorry; why should they? The affair could easily be remedied by getting another apprentice. Thus are all the bosses with their terrible ambition—all that interests them is to continue to exploit.

"Bosses, owners of farms or factories have always abused the poor working people.

"The cotton will soon be made into clothing for the owner. The Negro works for his wages from sun to sun.

"The owner was thinking only of making himself rich, he therefore used the machinery that he might save money for himself and he did not think of the men he left to die of hunger. I think machinery ought to be used to make man's work easier and not to take work from him."

"The Blood of The Sun.—The radiance of the sun

blots as if it were blood; the blood poured out by a generation of disinherited people; the radiance of the sun blots the sown field. Would that this blood poured out by the sun were the blood of the boss.

"My greatest bitterness is to see myself in the power of the rich man when there are so many poor people who die of cold. There are palaces where the carpets and rugs are of wool and the feet sink softly into them, and yet there are people who at night sleep in the streets and cover themselves with old newspapers. The boss knows neither compassion nor justice.

"Lift up thy forehead, O Indian! Throw off the conqueror. Thine is the land which thou dost water with thy fertilizing sweat. Land belongs to him who cares for it, always to him who works it. Stand upon thy feet, O farmer, and bring about thine own redemption.

"The owner earns from the making of shawls a great deal of money, yet he does not divide his gains.

"The owner has no heart and he continues to exploit the workers. He has become rich with the work of the weavers. Thus is great capital amassed by exploiting the working people, not paying them what is just and denying to them a part in the earnings. All capital has its origin in the exploitation of the working people."

"The Church.—When the Spaniard conquered our Indians he erected by the side of the police jail, the jail of the Church. In the Church they taught meek resignation, the sort which carried out in life the law of the conqueror. Think, country child, how much churches are worth and what you could do with that gold in your hands:—schools for the children, hospitals,

dispensaries, tractors,—yes, many tractors. In places of churches: high schools or gymnasiums.”

Either the author or illustrator of this series of school books was once a student in a Protestant school, and the illustrator is now head of the Division of Fine Arts in the Department of Public Education.

In connection with such textbooks, the teachers are provided with material for lectures, conveying the same ideas.

I had a long hunt to find someone prepared to give me any kind of definition of “Socialistic Teaching”; the following is the nearest to anything definite that I could obtain from any source. It came from an educator deeply informed and sympathetic with the Government’s *general* educational plans:—

“1. Question:

What do you mean by Socialistic teaching?

Is it teaching a politico-social philosophy?  
or,

Is it simply teaching about social relations?

“Answer: In order to answer this question it is necessary to explain first that in order to check the advance of real socialism, capitalistic governments all over the world, and Mexico also, have adopted a special socialism which they call “state socialism.” Real socialism is an economic tendency of the masses of workers toward betterment in all lines. The socialism of the Mexican Government is not an economic tendency but



a sort of varnish which aims only at doing away with religious fanaticism and combating the Catholic clergy. It is not possible to have "socialistic teaching" in a country which has a government of capitalists and large land holders.

"Teachers are divided into two groups: those who are religious and those who are revolutionary. Neither group engages in any anti-religious activity because they know that they will encounter great obstacles and that they will only retard the acceptance of real socialism. Prior to the amendment of Article III there was social work in the schools, and this work has continued to be carried on in the same way.

2. "Q. In regard to religion,

is it simply anti-Roman  
Catholic and clerical, or  
is it anti-religious and  
atheistic?

"A. The work of the Government is very different from that of the schools. The Government hides its false socialism with an anti-clerical campaign in favor of atheism and is not supported either by the teachers who are religious nor those who are socialists.

3. "Q. Is it mechanistic and humanistic or does it give a spiritual conception of the universe?

"A. In the schools, in general, fanaticism is combated and an attempt is made to give a SCIENTIFIC conception of natural phenomena, eliminating all mystery or unreality. A morality is taught which tends to do "good for good itself" without any desire for recompense and without fear of punishments in another world.

4. "Q. Has the present government any unifying 'ideology' or any defined social philosophy?

"A. In the present Government there are elements who are capitalists and enemies of Socialism. They combat the clergy because the clergy is their competitor. There are also sincere Socialists like President Cárdenas who work for the economic well-being of the masses of workers. The socialist teachers support these objectives, preparing a new generation capable of taking over the direction of industry and of agriculture.

5. "Q. How do you regard such expressions of the revolution as the Rivera and Orozco frescoes? Are they appropriate and wholesome for a school environment?

"A. The frescoes of Rivera and Orozco represent the personal opinions of these men. They are preserved as expressions of modern art. Those that refer to the condition of slavery through which the workers have passed are beneficial to the students.

6. "Q. How do thoughtful teachers regard Garrido Cánabal and his followers?

"A. The majority of teachers consider Garrido a farce. He cannot be a Socialist because he exploits the workers on his great haciendas. In order to cover up his false socialism he reveals himself anti-clerical. The formation of groups of "fascists" or "red shirts" has cost him much of the sympathy of the workers.

7. "Q. Is Mexico likely to become a totalitarian state? If not, what is likely to become its political form?

"A. Mexico will not come to be a 'fascist' country like Italy or Germany, in which the State dominates all norms of life. The future political form of Mexico will have as its basis the most ample democracy, for the Government will not be really in the hands of the

workers. Real Socialism will make its way in the not distant future and all exploiters—the bourgeoisie, the clergy, the militarists—will be eliminated.”

While I was seeking to get these various interpretations of the Government’s program I happened to notice in one of the Mexican papers a report from Yucatan regarding religious teaching, the headline of which stated that all teachers had been compelled to renounce their religion and *a declarar que son ateos* (declare themselves atheists). I secured the pledge which runs as follows:

“I, ———, before the Department of Federal Education, do solemnly declare that I accept without any reservation whatever, the program of socialist education and that I am a propagandist and defender of this program.

“I declare that I am an atheist, irreconcilable enemy of the Roman Catholic religion, and that I will use my efforts to destroy said religion and to do away with all religious profession, and that I am ready to oppose the clergy whenever and wherever it may be necessary.

“I declare that I am ready to take a chief part in the campaigns against fanaticism and to attack the Roman Catholic religion wherever it manifests itself.

“At the same time, I will not permit any religious practices of any kind in my home, nor any images, and I will not permit any of the members of my family under my authority to attend any service of a religious character.” (January 23, 1935)

While these various pledges vary in form in different

States of the Republic, they all appear to be sponsored by the Director of Federal Education, who is responsible to the Secretary of Public Education. The following would appear to be one for which the Federal Department was responsible:

“IDEOLOGICAL DECLARATION

“Name of Teacher.....

“Married or Single..... Age.....

“Normal Graduate?.... Yes.... No.... School.....

“I. I declare that I am willing to obey and to cause to be obeyed Article III of the Constitution.

“II. I declare that I am willing to support the ends of socialist education and the institutions and Government of the Republic in implanting said education in the schools.

“III. I declare that I am ready to spread without reservation the postulates and principles of Socialism which the National Government stands for.

“IV. I declare CATEGORICALLY that I do not profess the Catholic religion nor any other.

“V. I declare CATEGORICALLY that I will combat with every means the schemes of the Catholic clergy and other religions.

“VI. I declare CATEGORICALLY that I will not practice any religious observance, either internal or external, of the Roman Catholic or any other religion.

“Place and Date.....

.....  
Teacher's Signature

“The Federal Educational Inspector who signs below

affirms that the signature above is the signature which the above teacher uses in his official business.

.....  
 Signature of the Inspector  
 Visa'ed  
 .....  
 Director of Federal Education"

So far as I could learn, these pledges had not appeared in the Federal District, although the teachers continuing in some of the private schools, which were temporarily authorized, are said to have been called upon to sign statements that they were not church members.

While the Church has been intellectually backward, one certainly wonders whether a political party is likely to do any better in its effort to regulate scientific thought and formulate educational principles and policies.

In connection with the education of children, occasional motion pictures are widely advertised as bearing upon the past history of the Church. One depicting the atrocities of the Inquisition would have the effect on the child mind of creating horror for the Church and for the priesthood. It was set up and arranged in most effective fashion.

During the time that I was in Mexico City the Church found an ally, or rather "associated power" which may have very great effect unless the Government is wiser than it has been under some similar conditions. The National University of Mexico was up in arms against the so-called Socialist teaching and the

complete control by the State over the preparatory education leading up to the University. Practically all of the universities in Mexico took similar positions, with this difference, that while the National University confined its protest almost entirely to the question of academic freedom, some of the other universities came out in manifest sympathy for the Church, or at least in protest against the Government's attacks upon the Church.

Inasmuch as the universities may become an influential if not determining factor, so far as both politics and religion are concerned, I attempted to secure reliable information concerning the university point of view by interviewing members of the faculties in several States. While I found the people in authority in the National University reticent and inclined to disclaim any interest in either the political or religious situation except in so far as it directly affected the National University itself, I was able, nevertheless, to secure a fairly reliable cross section of university opinion. While the following account of the situation of the National University represents the faculty point of view, there appeared in the newspaper a report of a demonstration on the part of students under the auspices of a federation which issued its "manifesto" in the name of students and workers of the Republic attacking the Government.

The University of Mexico is the oldest in America, originally established in 1553. It was reinstituted and organized as at present, at the end of the Díaz régime as a strictly lay institution by a group of men who, like

the rest of the official liberal *intelligentsia*, had no particular liking for the Church and had in fact accepted the philosophy of Comte, which had been introduced into Mexico by Gabino Barreda.

It is, however, of interest that, as also in the case of most Government schools, several Departments of the University are housed in buildings originally put up by the Church and confiscated at different periods by anti-clerical administrations. The Faculty of Medicine occupies the old palace of the Inquisition. The National Preparatory School is housed in the old Jesuit College of San Ildefonso, a gem of Spanish Colonial architecture. The Jesuits have been singularly unfortunate in this respect, as the famous "Mascarones" building, which is also of great beauty and was acquired by them not many years ago, was also confiscated recently and is now shared between the Ministry of Education and the University.

In the course of the last few years the University, which formerly was under the Ministry of Education, has been successful in severing the relationship. The process started in 1929, when it obtained a considerable degree of independence. At present, although an official institution, it is autonomous; and it is perhaps significant that when it secured its unqualified freedom in 1933 it was regarded as the result of a student riot which took place when an effort was made to have the institution adopt the "Socialistic" type of education, which was then already in the air.

The administration at that time severed its remain-

ing connections with the University and set it adrift with a total endowment of only \$10,000,000 (Mex.) instead of the previous annual grant of \$3,000,000. As student fees are very low and the income on the \$10,000,000 is less than 25% of the sum which it had formerly received, many people interpreted the action of the administration as a device on the part of the officials to set the University "on the rocks" in order to get rid of what had been a thorn in its side for several years. The Government is said to be avowedly uninterested in higher education except for technical training; while there are some highly cultivated men in its service, the rank and file of the *políticos* are very ignorant and amongst these the small proportion sincerely interested in education have the theory that everything can be achieved by manual labor and technical leaders.

As a matter of fact, it is claimed that the action of the administration proved the real making of the university. The first Rector after the event, Licenciado Manuel Gomez Morín, who is regarded as one of the finest and most inspiring personalities in Mexico today, and who has constructive talent to an extraordinary degree, infused such a spirit into the University that in spite of its appalling poverty there was immediate improvement all around. Sr. Morín, who had previously been President of the Bank of Mexico and Sub-Secretary of Finance, had at that time an unusually lucrative law practice, but promptly proceeded to give it up and fixed his salary as Rector at 400 pesos a month. Another clash with the administration over the "Socialist" edu-



cation last year, almost resulting in open revolt among the students against the Government, compelled him to resign, to the unanimous regret of all the members of the University, instructors and students alike; but a worthy successor appears to have been found in the present Rector, Dr. Fernando Ocaranza, well known as an historian and also for his accomplishments in medicine.

In spite of the extremely difficult financial situation in which it finds itself at present (a full-fledged professor is lucky if he receives \$15 (U. S.) monthly for a course), the University has not only refused to curtail its activities, but pursues a course quite the opposite. It maintains the following institutions: the Faculty of Philosophy and the Fine Arts; the Schools of Law and Economics; Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, the Nurses' College, Schools of Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Chemical Science, Music, and Physical Education. It also includes the National Preparatory School, the National Library, the Biological and Geological Institutes, the Astronomical Observatory and the Summer School, all with a budget of about \$2,000,000 (Mex.) (Less than \$600,000 U. S.). The fees are very low, so that all social classes are represented. There are 10,000 students, and the activities of the University range from the charting of the heavens, and the geological survey of the whole Republic of Mexico, to specialized courses on such subjects as Sanskrit, Russian, etc.

Although the University faculties include a fair number of devout Catholics, as well as a small proportion of

enthusiastic "Reds," both groups have, temporarily at least, forgotten their differences and joined forces with the bulk of their colleagues who are, as a matter of fact, said to be very close to those "liberal" ways of thinking which it is now the fashion to decry. A rabid anti-clericalism seems to have given way among many to mere indifference. The students are considerably more to the left, but on the whole the same remarks appear to apply to them as well. It is asserted by its friends that to describe the University as a bulwark of reaction is sheer nonsense. Such accusations are frequently made by partisans of the administration but are refuted vigorously by the former Rector, Gomez Morín. "It is well to recall," he has remarked, "that some words coined for political circulation have finished by losing, after passing from tongue to tongue, all positive meaning. Thus the word 'reactionary' lacks all value nowadays save that of a verbal missile cast by politicians against all those who do not happen to support them, regardless of their point of view."

The present Rector, although a great admirer of the work of the Franciscans in the times immediately after the Spanish Conquest, is a prominent member of the Rationalist Association. Professor Gonzáles Casanova, head of the Languages Department, is a Marxist. Professor Ochoterena, Director of the Biological Institute, and a world authority on desert flora, is mildly anti-religious and anti-clerical. Dr. Antonio Caso, Mexico's best known philosopher and the leader of Mexican youth for the last 25 years, is a "spiritualist" but not a Catho-

lic. His brother, the archeologist, who is head of the Department of History, is a free-thinker: incidentally, Dr. Alfonso Caso, who besides his position in the University was Director of the National Museum, which belongs to the administration, lost this latter post for refusing to march in the famous *manifestacion* together with many other free-thinkers like himself, who considered such a step entirely incompatible with their convictions.

Not long ago some unknown person described the University as "the last refuge of Liberty in Mexico". The phrase has "caught on" and there is hardly a council meeting when it is not repeated to satiety. At present the attitude of the members of the University towards present-day issues probably rests upon a point of view which would approximate very closely to that of the average Anglo-Saxon, but it is more violent and vehement in its form of expression. University men do not seem to have a very high idea of the intellectual equipment of the majority of the members of the *intelligentsia* in the service of the administration, although there are exceptions.

What has been said above also holds true of other institutions given over to higher education throughout the country, as to a certain extent they look to the National University of Mexico for leadership. The National University of Mexico is unique in that the student element is admitted almost on an equal footing to the management of the institution. Each School names two professors and two student delegates to the University

Council. Accordingly the Council represents the opinion not only of the instructors, but also of the student body. The apparently unanimous opposition on the part of University men, conservative, "red," or moderate, towards the Government, cannot fail to impress one as a significant feature of the Mexican situation at the present moment.

While I was engaged in these inquiries I learned that the National University had also come into conflict with the State on another issue, when it was proposed to extend its curriculum to embrace secondary or high school education, which had, for the last fifteen years or so, been in the hands of the State, or private schools under State supervision. The National University also made provision for the incorporation of private schools in connection with the University. It justified itself by reminding the Secretary of Public Education of a statement made by him that henceforth the courses in secondary schools would be directed towards the arts and crafts and technical training. The University claimed the right to train students for the professions and for research. The administration, however, took action in the direction of nullifying the action taken by the University. The latter holds that such nullification would be against the spirit and letter of the Constitution, and I understand that it has filed an appeal from the decision of the Government. University men told me, however, that they were likely to lose the appeal because all the members of the Supreme Court are appointees of the Government. The University, however, had gone

on enrolling students for this new curriculum and the situation at that time was very tense.

I was not altogether surprised, therefore, to note in the newspapers of March 20th a statement by President Cárdenas indicating a change of attitude on the part of the Government, and expressing a desire to reach a friendly settlement on the question of secondary education. I recalled that, a few days before this, university men had prophesied an open rupture between Government and University, to be accompanied by the usual student parade and "manifesto." I was told that the Government had taken its pacific attitude in order to avoid this. At last accounts it looked as though the University and the Government would come together, at least for the time being.

Even so, it is altogether likely that the totalitarian tendencies of the Mexican Government in the field of education will not find as easy a path as National Socialism did in Germany. (There, so far as is known, aside from the relatively few professors who were exiled either voluntarily or otherwise, the academic world simply allowed itself to be absorbed.) In any event there is a widespread feeling among educators that the so-called "Socialistic education," whether now so intended or not, would ultimately mean materialism in moral life, atheism in religion and communism in economics and government.

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## THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH: THE POSITION AND CONTENTION OF THE STATE

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REPRESENTATIVES of the Mexican Government were for the most part content with stating their position in rather general terms, with the partial exception of Sr. Portes Gil. General Calles, the alleged Dictator, appears to have been silent recently on this point. While this of course may be attributed largely to his long illness, there is the feeling in some quarters that he is not altogether satisfied. On the other hand, he may simply have preferred to express his opinions or give his directions to his associates in private. Proponents of the Government, however, frequently quote now from his article published some time ago in "Foreign Affairs" as follows:

"I wish to lay stress upon the fact that a real religious problem does not exist in Mexico. I mean that there is no such thing as persecution of religious character against

religious creeds, or opposition on the part of the Government to the dogmas or practices of any religion.

"It is true that the Constitution of Mexico has provisions that the Catholic high clergy consider incompatible with their constant and illegitimate intervention in politics and questions of state, or with their holding economic strength as a means of spiritual influence and a principal factor of domination of a material order. So long as the clergy do not obtain through the legal means and methods contained in the Constitution itself, and through an act of Congress approved by at least one-third of the state legislatures, the derogation or amendment of the provisions that aim at crushing the political strength of the clergy by means of making their properties the property of the nation, the Government fulfills an elemental duty in complying with these laws and enforcing a strict obedience to them. So long as the clergy in Mexico fail to win over the confidence of the great liberal majority of my country (a result that cannot be attained if the clergy, disregarding their high functions, hold to the methods systematically employed so far to secure advantages of a material and political order, unbecoming to their character), I seriously believe that the abolition or amendment of these articles of the Constitution cannot be accomplished."

How far his attitude may have changed with regard to religion in general since his earlier open sympathy with Protestant institutions and work (expressed to myself and many others), it is very hard to determine.

It is frequently charged that General Calles never had any real sympathy with Protestantism or with religion, and that he simply attempted to use the Protestant churches as a club in his attack on the Roman Catholic Church.

President Lázaro Cárdenas impresses me as an amiable man but one deficient in personal initiative. He was earnest and enthusiastic in outlining the principles and main features of the Six-Year Plan, and more especially its educational sections, as indicated in the letter on his behalf from the Secretary of Public Education.\* So far as the church situation is concerned, however, public expression of the governmental attitude appears to have been delegated to Sr. Portes Gil.

The Minister of Public Education on his part outlined to me for about an hour the Six-Year Plan, particularly its educational aspects, and assured me that the question of alleged atheistic education was being seriously considered by his Department, more particularly in regard to the textbooks to which parents and teachers had raised widespread and earnest opposition.

Shortly after my conversation with him, President Cárdenas delivered to the university authorities and students an address in which he declared that the Government was making no attack either on religion or on the universities. At about the same time, Sr. Portes Gil issued a statement (apparently on behalf of the President), inviting the students to cooperate with the Government. He assured them that the administration is

\* See page 80.



earnestly devoting itself to the general good, which is the purpose of the Revolution, without any intention of attacking any religious creed respectful of the Revolution. He especially disclaimed any adverse measures so far as the University was concerned.

The Secretary of Foreign Relations is a gentleman of combined dignity, graciousness and courteous deference. He, unlike some other members of the cabinet, has nothing in his personality that suggests the fanatic, the radical or the bigot. I asked Sr. Portes Gil whether or not he had changed or modified the views previously expressed by him when he was Attorney General of the Republic. He said that those conclusions remained unchanged.\* This document, therefore, may be considered as representing the case of the Government, and indeed its contents were supported by other members of the Cabinet in their conversations.

The preface to this document reproduces a letter from former President Abelardo Rodríguez, in which he declared:

“Under the pretext of the draft of Amendments to Article 3 of the Constitution submitted to Congress by the National Revolutionary Party, and already adopted both by the Chamber of Deputies and by the Senate, the Catholic clergy have undertaken a campaign of open sedition in which they clearly reveal their intention of going as far as rebellion. These activities of the

\* *The Conflict Between the Civil Power and the Clergy: A Historical and Legal Essay*, by Emilio Portes Gil. Press of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1935.

Catholic clergy are nothing new, nor are they a surprise, either for the elements of the Revolution or for the Nation, because it is a case of an historical attitude persistently maintained. They endeavor, by taking advantage of any opportunity, to assail any advanced principle or any benefit which the people may have succeeded in winning by force of arms from its traditional and ancient enemy. The latter, when circumstances are favorable to him, crouches in concealment, but not inactive, awaiting the time when his diminished prestige and lessened power shall oblige him to adopt an attitude that will seem decisive."

The former Attorney General (now Secretary of Foreign Relations) states that it is his purpose to "set forth the criminal interference of the Catholic clergy in the Republic of Mexico, in past times and at this day," and goes on:

"... In order to explain the present condition of those religious associations and corporations known as 'churches,' which are *de facto* institutions with no standing in law, we must turn to the data in regard to their guilt as shown by present activities. Their character of infringement of criminal provisions now in force merits severe punishment. With respect to the part played by this problem in the historical development of the Republic, an organization necessarily spiritual has resorted to all kinds of improper proceedings in its eagerness to become possessed of the greatest amount of material resources, and has, by reason of its moral and physical

enslavement of the masses, made it impossible for any political organization to undertake an energetic program of government."

He continues by stating that the religious activities of the Church have been carried on with the . . . "entirely selfish aims of swelling the fortunes of the clergy, of enhancing their political power and of freely allowing undue traffic in the acts of religion. When capital is accumulated in the hands of the clergy it is disastrously exported from the country to uphold an alien sovereign; besides which, convents, seminaries and other similar institutions are centers of indolence, idleness and the repetition of useless acts, and places where those superstitions and falsehoods that darken the soul of childhood, the teaching of youth and the judgment of grown men are fostered."

*"To the Church has now come the hour when its responsibility will be exacted from it; the Mexican State cannot in any way permit a renewal of criminal interference by any religious group."*

"Our political code expressly defines the main principles governing the organization of the State; and consequently, the principle that religious groups must necessarily submit to regulation by the political department constitutes one of the bases of our constitutional system."

A large section of this pronouncement is devoted to ancient history, recording decrees, policies and actions on the part of the Church, many or at least some of which its own historians condemn today, often without

modification. It really adds little to the brief of the State; the substance of it is that the Church became the agent of materialism. In regard to its hold on the Indian, Sr. Portes Gil declares:

"It may be asserted without fear of error that the Indians of this country were then and continue to be idolaters. . . . Neither the Conquistador nor the missionary ever reached the soul of the Indian peoples, they never had the strength, either material or moral, to assimilate the Indian; far from this, they always adopted a policy of aloofness, ill-treated the Indian, enslaved him, and fostered race hatred. . . .

"The Indian was invariably the one who carried out those architectural works (churches and convents, etc.), and even in many cases the designer. It nearly always happened that he was not paid for his work; he was either deceived by promises for the life to come or was obliged by force to render his services. Lands lay untilled and industries were not developed. If some part of the effort devoted to the building of churches had been available for really useful works, if the fields had been cultivated, and bridges and roads built, had industry been organized and the people taught to work so as to gain genuine and immediate economic results, Mexico would have established her economic organization on a sound basis.

"The Church was an institution fundamentally devoted to the exploitation of everybody: Spaniards and Indians, rich and poor.

"Catholicism, with its severe ritual and vigorous

dogma, is almost entirely foreign to the Indian. He does not, never has, and perhaps never will, understand the real substance of Christian doctrine."

The alleged great wealth of the Catholic Church in Mexico in earlier years is of course one of the chief targets at which the author aims his shafts:

"... Who can deny the insolent luxury by which the Church was surrounded? Those same monks who had taken vows of humility and poverty?"

Nor does the Holy Inquisition escape the bitterest accusation, viz.:

"To the Dominican friars fell the unenviable glory of conducting that Tribunal (the Inquisition) which, by a sort of mockery, was called holy, and which discharged its functions in a building adjacent to the monastery of Santo Domingo, a building which now houses Mexico's School of Medicine. . . . The judgments of that court were executed in the main square of the City of Mexico, and were surrounded by great pomp and solemnity, intended to produce great panic and terror. The whole of this sinister spectacle, so often cursed by the victims, contributed to strengthen and firmly establish the enormous power of the clergy. . . . Unlimited severity, implacable harshness, were shown by the tribunal of the Inquisition, and all the aspirations and all the efforts of human intelligence fell into its clutches and were stifled therein. All opinions, schools of philosophy or politics, all economic or scientific ideas of every kind that could . . . involve any danger, however slight, or any discussion even, of

clerical control over people's consciences, or in any way affect the doctrines on which it was based, were declared heretical. . . . Another of the public functions that strengthened clerical domination was that of ecclesiastical censorship exercised on public expression of thought. The clergy were the supreme authority as to what books, what theories, what publications were to come to the knowledge of the public, and what others were to be withheld. Can one conceive of any greater control, of any more irritating tyranny over spirit and conscience, than that hateful and obnoxious despotism?"

And furthermore: ". . . while preaching of Heaven they appropriated the earth" according to a quotation from Father Benavente, as early as 1555. Summing up this chapter is the paragraph:

"What cruel times were those, in which people had to struggle with the malignity, immorality, ignorance and greed both of the authorities of the Viceroyalty and of the Church, which bore all the appearances of a peculiarly commercial institution. All this brought along with it as a necessary consequence the economic and moral breakdown of our nation, and the heavy and onerous inheritance bequeathed to us as an independent people. If this constitutes an historical stage, if those evils took root at a given period of our history, we should not any longer bear the opprobrious weight of that inheritance. This has been the task of the Revolutionary Government in its open and resolute campaign against religious fanaticism and the all-absorbent power of the Church."

In discussing the position and policy of the Church during colonial times, the author observes:

"The economic and social inequality fostered by the Church and State has separated the various classes ever since the Conquest. All legislation had as its fundamental idea the domination of the natives and submission to the political power and control by the Church; the predominance of the clergy and of the Church is one of the most characteristic features of the colony.

"When the movement for independence began, the clergy, as Altamirano asserts, split: 'the higher and wealthier clergy, that which enjoyed the most lucrative benefices in the large towns and administered the great properties of the regular monastic institutions, declared against independence from the very outset, while the lower clergy, the village priests, those of the countryside and of the mountains, the friars of certain humble monasteries, sympathized with the movement for independence, and its first and most illustrious leaders sprang from that poor clergy, who had been in close contact with the misery of the people.' No one could deny that yearning for something, that unconscious need of some change in the social organization which was reflected in the middle classes, in the village priests and in the lower ranks of army officers. . . . Only independence could give rise to the establishment of a new organization and open the way to the new ideas of the century. . . .

"The higher clergy 'are Catholics out of policy alone,

their God is Mammon, they avail themselves of religion itself to drag it down and destroy it,' said Father Miguel Hidalgo Y Costilla, the liberator and Father of Mexican Nationalism, . . . excommunicated by the Holy Office in 1810, as a means of lending support to the royalist party."

In tracing the steps through which the Church acquired its ascendancy over the civil power following the gaining of Mexican independence and the promulgation of the Constitution of 1812 (which already had an anti-clerical trend), the author goes on to say:

"The rights in former years vested in the King of Spain were thus recovered by the Mexican clergy by a stroke of boldness. No more splendid triumphs could be granted to ultramontaniam than thus, at one stroke and under the name of right of devolution, to remain in possession of the patronage. . . .

"The independence of Mexico paralyzed the reformation that had already begun in Spain in church matters; then the clergy, turning to account the very important part played by them in Mexico's independence, declared the priesthood entirely free of all influence of the civil power, denied the right of the Government to that Patronage that the King of Spain had enjoyed and to which the Government thought that it was entitled, as the heir to the powers over the Church vested in the Government of Spain."

After a lengthy account of the alleged complicity and leadership of the Church in treasonable negotiations, and in disloyalty to the new independent Republic, the



author proceeds to cite the "reform" beginning with Juárez. He explains and interprets the severity of the laws against Church and clergy on the ground of necessity, as developed in his previous historical narrative, and voices the profound distrust in which the religious profession had come to be held. In the later Díaz period it is even declared that:

"In the matter of public charity the clergy took charge, for the purpose of speculation, of asylums, hospitals, foundling hospitals, and foundations, placing these institutions in charge of nuns and members of different orders . . .

"The wealth accumulated by the clergy during the Government of General Díaz may be reckoned at over eight hundred million pesos."

After expatiating at length on the misdoings of the clergy since the tragic adventure of Maximilian, the author succinctly states:

"This, in broad outlines, represents the attitude of the Mexican clergy from 1874 to 1913, an attitude which can certainly be regarded as censurable, unpatriotic, uneconomic, unsocial and, to a great extent, immoral for the whole Republic."

- Sr. Portes Gil faces resolutely the criticism which has evidently been fairly generally directed against the wholesale confiscation of Church properties by the Revolutionary Government. Thus he says further:

"Why, it will be asked, should the possession of such interests by the Clergy not be lawful? Why should it be condemned to possess nothing at all?

"Because in Mexico the Clergy never has had any legitimate interests, and because it is not, and never will be, capable of modifying its attitude.

"We have already furnished proof of this, but shall again briefly review that proof:

"The Catholic Church has created round about herself and her dogmas a complete philosophy which embraces every branch not only of human wisdom, but also of all human activity. She maintains she is the vicar of Christ on earth, that she is in possession of absolute and incontrovertible truth in regard to the ultimate destiny of man and of the means of achieving it, that the Pope stands in the place and stead of God in his relation with mankind, and that the words of the Pontiff are infallible in matters of dogma and morals. These postulates certainly do lead to a series of conclusions, by means of which the Church, as was natural, gradually possessed herself, first of the whole of mankind, and after that of everything belonging to man. That being so, it was to be inferred as a necessary consequence that the ends of the Church as being connected with the ultimate destiny of man, were the most perfect of all, and therefore that the State, the action of which is confined to matters connected with the temporal welfare of man, is to a certain extent inferior to the Church and must be subordinate to it.

"The conclusion thus drawn is quite a logical one, those acts which are directly conducive to a more immediate purpose, such as temporal welfare, must be subordinated to those others, so that if man as a member

or as the head of the State, is about to do this or that, because according to his understanding it is the best way of compassing temporal welfare, and such action is not the best fitted for obtaining the ultimate purpose, he must sacrifice temporal welfare and act in accord with the rules relating to the ultimate purpose.

"Thus do we see that the power is alleged, by Divine Right, of directing the State and that the Church laid down the proposition that in it is vested the authority to govern the world, by Divine Right direct from God.

"We have already seen what the attitude of the Church was at the time of the American invasion; it refused to furnish funds for carrying on the war and threatened to suspend worship should any such be exacted from them by force. That refusal was not surprising. José Fernando Ramírez states that the attitude of the higher dignitaries of the clergy could be summed up in the following declaration: 'If the Americans respect the worship and the property of the Church, nothing will be lost by the Invasion.' And consistently with their own ideas they sallied forth to receive them under a canopy as they were to do later in the case of the French invaders, as they ushered in Maximilian of Austria, and as they had always upheld the Spaniards. And thus will they support any invasion, any iniquity, or any treason if favorable to their interests, as they have no Fatherland nor God nor religion, but money. They are not willing to yield an inch of ground and

what they have yielded in Mexico and everywhere else in the world has been wrung from them by force . . .

"The chief motive of the present conflict, instigated and supported by the Clergy, is to endeavor to withdraw itself from subjection to civil authority.

"The Church is the formidable enemy which the Constitution of 1857 had to face. But in 1914 it found itself again facing that same enemy, and to show this we have had to review anew its attitude throughout the past. In our review we have shown that the stand taken by it against the Law and against the civil authority is exactly the same as in Colonial time, just as in 1810, 1822, 1833, 1836, and 1865; and that after the lengthy period enjoyed by it for recovery it has again adopted the same attitude in 1913, 1914, 1917, 1926, and 1934.

"And how did the Clergy receive the new Constitution (of 1917)? The first thing it did was to publish a protest in the United States as soon as it was proclaimed, which protest was reproduced in 1926, when the constitutional principles bearing on those matters in which the Clergy were interested began to be carried out in a regular manner.

"The protest . . . is full of errors; it asserts, among other things, that the tendency of the Constitution is to destroy religion, culture, and tradition. This is absolutely false: the Clergy confuse religion with its own privileges, which are all that we are attacking.

" . . . if any other association—banks, let us say,—dared to send to their branches a circular ordering them

to disobey the law, what would we say? Would we not appeal to the authorities to compel such rebels to obey or to leave? Why then should we be more tolerant towards the Clergy? This the more as its offense is more serious. Protests are distributed IN OTHER COUNTRIES designed to create an atmosphere hostile to Mexico. It sets in motion alien elements and societies and instigates them to attack this country as in the case of the Knights of Columbus (at their Philadelphia Convention) when they endorsed paragraphs like the following: 'We request the President of the (United States) Republic and the State Department to put an end to that ignominious contempt shown by Calles for American demands . . .'

"The Church in 1926 contended for that same ideal which she pursues today and which she has always pursued.

"The Mexican State does not admit the principle of Divine Right claimed by the Clergy.

"Fanaticism . . . now asserts that we are attempting to pervert youth by means of the new constitutional program of education. By making this assertion, the Clergy pursue the old tactics of misleading public opinion and of creating a stifling atmosphere that hinders the onward march of the Government. . . . Nothing shall, however, make us pause in our desire to make childhood understand that it constitutes an organic element of society, and that it will only be able to achieve individual well-being if collective well-being be achieved as well. . . . If the children of Mexico are to be Chris-

tians, let them learn Christian doctrine from the very fount and lips of the Master as taught by the Gospel. . . . Mexico applauds the doctrine, making for equality of all, of Him who treated the rich with harshness and the poor and weak with tenderness and brotherly love. We applaud Him who yielded the first place to the humblest, He who exposed the manoeuvres of the priests called by Him a 'race of vipers' and 'whited sepulchres' and we likewise applaud Him because He was able to drive out of the temple, whip in hand, both Pharisees and merchants.

"It is absolutely necessary that children should hear in specific and simple words the principles on which rest our non-conformity with our present social organization, which sanctions a disastrous distribution of wealth, in our case aggravated to an extraordinary degree by the policy of organizations which, like the Catholic Clergy, have retarded our economic and intellectual development, because they enjoyed a monopoly of wealth and culture.

"The Constitution of the country states that: 'Mexican nationality is lost by the mere fact of officially serving under a foreign Government.' Now, the Clergy tells us that whether the Mexican Congress wishes it or not, they obey only the Pope. The Constitution adds: 'National sovereignty rests essentially and originally in the people.' The Clergy answers: 'The Pope has decreed that this principle is heresy.'

"The members of the Clergy do not feel themselves subjects of the Mexican State but of the Pope. Now, the

Pope, since he has gained temporal dominion over the Vatican State, has become the chief of a State. He has his kingdom, his court, his senate, his cabinet, his ambassadors, etc., why should he not be looked upon as the head of a foreign government? And if the members of the Clergy are mere subjects of that Chief of State, and refuse to obey the administration of our country and even make opposition to our laws, what is there wanting to warrant us in considering them purely and simply as undesirable aliens?"

The final considerations include the following:

"The Church in Mexico, with its secular and regular clergy, had at one time the character of a true caste, which composed the civil power together with the nobility and the dynasty, both monarchs and statesmen having found themselves compelled to restrain the expansionist tendency that characterizes its history.

"It preserved that character of a caste that enabled it to accumulate wealth, to draw to itself civil functions, fiscal and economic prerogatives and the control of consciences, to become, after Mexico achieved her independence, a faction more or less openly rebellious to the civil power, and which resolutely opposed the State in the latter's movement for reform.

"At the present time, the Government born of the Revolution, like all its predecessors in the history of the country, finds it necessary, in order to carry out its plans for social and economic action, to repress the clergy. If at one time it fought as a caste sharing power with the exploiting class, and later became a rebel fac-

tion, it now, as a party, surreptitiously attempts to hold its positions. The posts it succeeded in occupying during the régime of General Díaz are difficult to discover and to destroy by reason of their being concealed, dissimulated and clandestine. . . .

"At this period of social and economic change, and of crisis in the forces of production and political and juridical institutions, the Government had decided to give education definite orientation and guidance in the sense of socialism. It abandons the standard of laical education as sterile and antiquated in order to make youth acquainted with the vices of the capitalistic régime, and more particularly to instruct it in the true economic and social condition of Mexico. As the basis of its endeavor to achieve the moral and economic emancipation of the country, the necessity on the part of the Public Power to repress and, if possible, to suppress altogether, the temporal activities of the Clergy of Mexico, becomes imperative.

"To see to it, firmly and constantly, that the Law be strictly complied with, and to respect and obey that Law, is essential to the institutional existence of a People."

In an appendix to *The Conflict Between the Civil Power and the Clergy* there are given instances of alleged defiance of the laws of the land by the officials of the Church and the papal representative, as well as excerpts from correspondence containing what might be termed "treasonable" utterances, viz.:



"No Catholic can be a Socialist without seriously falling short of his duties, nor can he either be a member of the P.N.R., in view of the fact that the latter has declared itself to be openly socialistic and, what is worse, atheistic." (From the protest of the Apostolic Delegate, Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores to the Catholics of Mexico.)

A pronouncement prepared by Arturo M. Elias, formerly Consul General of Mexico, and widely circulated in the United States, is almost identical with that of Sr. Portes Gil. We may, however, call attention to certain statements of Sr. Elias which have very important bearing on the real heart of the subject. He declares that: "If the Church hierarchy had confined itself to legitimate spiritual channels, not a single one of these laws would ever have been enacted." "It has not been war against religion . . . those in each generation who have led the forces against the temporal power of the Church have had nothing but respect for true religion."

Attention is frequently called to the fact that the Mandate of Pope Pius IX, issued against the 1857 Constitution, still stands, as follows:

"Thus we make known to the faith in Mexico, and to the Catholic universe, that we energetically condemn every decree that the Mexican Government has enacted against the Catholic religion, against the Church, and her sacred ministers and pastors, against her laws, rights and property, and also against the authority of the

Holy See. We raise Our Pontifical Voice with apostolic freedom before you to condemn, reprove, and declare null, void, and without any value, the said decrees, and all others which have been enacted by the civil authorities in such contempt of the ecclesiastical authority of this Holy See, and with such injury to the religion, to the sacred pastors, and illustrious men."

The best friends of the Roman Church admit that it has in times past interfered in politics, but declare that this is not true of recent years. That the Church has defied the Constitution of the Mexican nation, however, is of course undeniable. In 1926 Archbishop Mora y del Rio declared in one of the Mexican papers as follows:

"The doctrine of the Church is invariable because it is the truth divinely revealed. The protest which the prelates of the Mexican Church made in 1917 against the constitutional articles that are opposed to liberty and religious teachings are firmly reiterated. It has not been modified; it has been strengthened because it has been derived from the doctrine of the Church.

"The information published in *El Universal* on the 27th of January, with reference to the campaign which will be undertaken against these unjust laws which are so contrary to natural right, is perfectly accurate. We, the episcopate, the clergy, and the Catholics do not recognize Articles 3, 5, 27, and 130 of the present Constitution, but rather we shall combat them.

"Under no circumstances can we abandon this criterion without treason to our faith and to our religion."

The Archbishop was brought to court but was acquitted of the charge that he had commanded the people to disobey the law of the land. Other eminent bishops made declarations to the effect that even though the laws be fundamental or organic, past, present, or future, they meant nothing to them if they violated the rights which the Church claimed.

In 1927 the Archbishop of Durango, who was in Rome, issued a pastoral letter in which he said:

"Now that, in our archdiocese, many Catholics have appealed to the recourse of arms, and ask advice from their Prelate, advice which we cannot refuse when asked for by our own sons, we believe it to be our Pastoral duty to face the question fully; assuming fully (*con plena consciencia*) the responsibility before God, and before history, we dedicate to them these words: We did not provoke this armed movement. But now that that movement exists, pacific means having been exhausted, *to our Catholic sons raised in arms in defense of their social and religious rights, after having thought at great length before God and after having consulted the wisest theologians of Rome, we ought to say to you: be at peace in your consciences and receive our benedictions.*"

While the Roman Catholic authorities have declared that they were not fomenting a counter-revolution, Archbishop Mora y del Rio expressed himself in the following terms:

"We have aided no revolution, we have plotted no

revolution, but we do claim that the Catholics of Mexico have the right to fight for their rights by peaceful means first and *with arms in an extremity.*"

This attitude is continuing without much modification. I found widely circulated in Mexico City a Mandate issued by the Apostolic Delegate, Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, dated "San Antonio, Texas, December 12, 1934." It reads as follows:

"In accordance with our divine Mission, we expressly prohibit Catholics from learning, teaching or cooperating efficiently in the learning or teaching, of what has been called in Mexico Socialist Education: that is, that the child belongs to the State and not to the family, that, in the instruction of the child, every possible endeavor should be made to root out of its soul every religious idea, even to the existence of God, and that ideas destroying private property and its rights should be inculcated: this declaration was made explicitly by the leaders of the Mexican Revolution. All of which is condemned by the Supreme Pontiffs. (Pius IX 'Quanta Cura'; Leo XIII, 'Duod Apostolici muneris,' and Cod. of Canonical Law, incurring the penalties and censures of said Law.)

"Therefore we expressly prohibit Catholics from opening or supporting schools in which Socialist teaching is given, or that they attend or send their children to these schools, be they either official or private."

The answer of the Secretary of Public Education, issued on January 7, 1935, was contained in a large

poster, publicly displayed, from which the following is an excerpt, freely translated:

"The Secretary of Education considers that the religious problem is an outcome of the economic situation. He believes that anti-scientific and anachronistic dogmas can succeed in dominating the consciences of only the ignorant and subjugated masses, i.e., he is of the opinion that lack of culture and abject misery provide a fertile field for the clerics (social parasites), who make proselytes under such conditions and who trade in superstition. The Secretary has viewed, and continues to regard, the present phase with serenity, confident that as the light of science and the redemptive effects of Socialism penetrate into all Mexican homes the shades of obscurantism will disappear."

While the Apostolic Delegate declares that bishops and priests have had no connection with armed groups, there is little doubt that Catholic bodies have organized without any attempt at restraint by the hierarchy, although without its sanction. Indeed, it would be very natural that the Church should encourage parents, workers and others to give it group assistance.

It is of course a well-known fact that the boycotts to which reference has been made were proposed in order to bring pressure to bear through the business interests of the nation. Although, so far as I know, this was never officially approved by the religious authorities, the proposal was made by the "League for the Protection of Religious Liberty." That it had the open

recognition of leading representatives of the Church is very probable.

His Excellency Archbishop Díaz told me frankly that he was breaking the law as a matter of regrettable necessity so far as permitting unauthorized priests, who had been driven from their parishes and livings, to officiate at Mass in the Cathedral. He introduced me to several such priests who had served fifteen days in jail for this infraction of the law. There is a difference of opinion as to this action of the Archbishop. Sympathizers with the Church say that he is doing it as a matter of principle, and they praise the priests who are willing to suffer confinement and severe privation. Proponents of the Government, however, declare that it is a purely diplomatic move on the part of the Archbishop to arouse the sympathy of the people and to raise protest, if not insurrection.

A proclamation, "To the Episcopacy, Clergy and Catholics of Mexico, from His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate at San Antonio," is lacking neither in vigor of condemnation nor in persuasive appeal to the people. He says to the latter: "There remains for us to protest with prudence and moderation against the so-called laws."

This injunction makes affirmations which one might discuss at length. Perhaps, however, its general tenor may be sufficiently indicated by its statement of papal authority, viz.:

"Wherefore, in the name of God and of our Holy Father Pope Pius XI, and in full accord with the Vener-

able Mexican Episcopacy, we give the following rules of conduct, by which the Prelates will be guided and by which the Secular and Regular Clergy and all the Faithful should be guided also:

"1. The Catholic Church recognizes no human power which can prevent Her from doing anything She Herself deems necessary for the salvation of souls; therefore in spiritual matters She is subordinate to no one. As regards the civil power, the Church is and will always be the first upholder of Authority, provided the latter does not exceed itself in its acts. *Per se*, the Church should be united with the State in order to harmonize its functioning for the better general good of the citizens, who are Catholics as well as citizens, but where this cannot be, the Church will tolerate the separation of the two powers, provided the Civil Power, as previously stated, does not interfere in what does not concern it.

"Hence the Government should not be surprised because, whenever an order is given abusing the rights of the Church as the self-contained body that it is, due protest is made; for the fact that force and violence prevent us from the free use of our rights does not mean that those rights ceased to exist, and therefore we clamor for justice. We should accordingly protest against every abuse of the inalienable liberties of the Church, doing so with prudence and Christian courage."

The conflict itself is described in these words:

"The struggle is not new, nor will it be the last. Light has always fought against darkness, truth against error, civilization against barbarism, good against evil, Christianity against Paganism, the sons of God against Lucifer and his followers. Let no one be afraid, for if

our enemies trust in their material powers, we have God on our side, with whose grace all things are possible. Therefore, however dark and difficult the solution of our serious situation may appear to be, however great the difficulties may be which we must meet, and however strong our enemies may be, let our confidence in Jesus Christ be that much greater, for with His omnipotent aid we can do everything; let us on our part do everything possible by preserving and augmenting the grace of God, by frequenting the Sacraments, by humble, faithful, and confident prayers; and let us practice the virtues, especially charity for our neighbors; let us not doubt—God will hear us, will aid us, and will give us the sacred freedom we long for.”

One of the employees of the Government, in referring to this document, declared that it was just this sort of thing which caused the assassination of President-Elect Obregón, whose assassin justified himself on the ground that he was: “Fighting for God against the enemies of the Church.”

So far as the charges of the Government against the intolerance of the Church are concerned, there is of course plenty of unhappy corroborative evidence. While this is not so frequently manifested now, one still finds documents circulated in which organizations and persons not in sympathy with the Church have had all kinds of terms applied to them indiscriminately, sometimes being designated as Socialists, atheists, Communists, “masonic,” and not infrequently “Protestant,” to indicate evil intentions.

In other statements emanating from the Apostolic Delegate there are utterances which Sr. Portes Gil de-



clares substantiate his charges that the Church is defying law and order. A Mexican bishop refers to the Government as a "hellish pack" and a "Bolshevik monster under the devil's own flag." The Government is declared to be composed of men who are "perverse and degenerate." In meeting the challenge this bishop says: "Let us go to any lengths that may be necessary."

A letter from the Apostolic Delegate is said to have contained the passage:

"... To the partisans of the sword we would have to show that they are free to do whatever they please so long as they do not drag in the clergy or the Church; it might be just as well to tell them that wisdom requires that they must not take a step of that kind unless they feel very sure of their ground, and that they must seriously consider the fact that they might, if they embarked on an adventure of that kind, settle the present incumbents firmer in power. . . . Let them organize and obey whomsoever assumes leadership in a disciplined manner and they will soon learn how to work without the direction of a cassock."

Representative officials of such social organizations as the Boy Scouts declare that it has been very difficult to maintain their institutions because the Church had insisted upon entire control. One might go on at considerable length citing examples of utterances and incidents giving support to some of the contentions of the Government. How far these procedures of the Church are justified by actions of the Government itself will be considered as we proceed.

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VI

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE  
AND CHURCH: THE ATTITUDE  
OF THE CHURCH

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MY FIRST approach to the Roman Hierarchy of Mexico was a visit to His Excellency, the Most Rev. Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores in a modest office in the guest house of the Convent of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas, where he is in exile. The Apostolic (Papal) Delegate is a gracious, restrained, simple personality, somewhere, I judge, in the seventies, whose demeanor is kindly, with no suggestion of belligerence and yet indicative of firmness and positiveness. Seeing that I looked inquiringly at the photograph of General Calles on his desk, he remarked, "I keep it there in order not to forget to pray for him every day." Although in exile, he appears to be well informed as to what is happening in Mexico. There was nothing intimating papal magnificence about him, but it is evident that he is still maintaining relationship between the Archbishop in Mexico and the Vatican.

In his conversation he is calm and makes no utterance for the purpose of relieving his feelings, although this is, I believe, the third time he has been driven from Mexico, the last occasion being because he had distributed the papal pronouncement which took the Mexican government to task on the ground that it had failed to live up to its agreement.

Speaking in general terms, he declared that the bishops and priests had been definitely instructed neither to favor nor oppose any of the alleged armed groups reported to be gathering from time to time in Mexico. He said that the faithful of the Church were advised to organize for the gaining of their liberty by peaceful means and also by political measures, because the latter were necessary in order to secure amendments to the constitution on which the present attack of the State is based. "Catholic action" as such, however, must keep apart from all political parties. This I understood to be the attitude of his Holiness, the Pope.

The Apostolic Delegate, however, believes in direct action, and shortly before the time of my visit he had addressed a letter to President Cárdenas pointing out errors which he declared the President had made in replying to questions put by correspondents of the press. The letter was written in positive and direct terms, declaring that the government itself was infringing upon the constitution and breaking the laws.

I requested His Excellency to say what he wished upon the Church's condemnation of Mexican Socialism, his own explanation of the so-called conflict between

the Church and the State in Mexico, and his personal opinion regarding Secretary Emilio Portes Gil's book entitled: *The Conflict between the Civil Power and the Clergy*. His replies were as follows:—

1.—“I know full well that there is no error without a part of truth, and so it is with Socialism. When the supreme authority of the Catholic Church condemns Socialism, such condemnation is understood to affect particularly certain principles and certain methods which seem to be inherent in Socialism.

“To begin with, if Socialism puts, as it does, all stress on the earthly gains of man and ignores entirely the ultimate happiness of man, we must proclaim that it is wrong from our Christian point of view, and Christianity cannot help but condemn it.

“If Socialism, in order to attain its materialistic ends, aims at destroying such or such social classes by violence or otherwise, and to upset the present social order by means of wholesale spoliation, by destroying all family rights disregarding the sacredness of the individual home, and by erasing from the face of the earth what we universally call Christian culture, then we insist that Socialism must be condemned.

“But there can be no doubt as to the particular brand of Socialism the Mexican rulers have in mind to impose upon the Mexican nation against its will. Such rulers are not short of words when it comes to expounding their ideas, their plans, their aims and purposes, and it is only reasonable that we must take their pronounce-

ments seriously. The type of Socialism they are building up is atheistic, communistic, and utterly materialistic. Of this there is an abundance of evidence.

"The entire session of the Mexican Congress, devoted to the discussion of Article 3 of the Constitution and its proposed and approved amendments (this being the Article dealing with public education), was nothing but a war against all religion, the very existence of God being denied by some of the speakers, and even the general traditions and morals created by religion in Mexico were viciously attacked. The spirit of the legislators is to be found in their arguments rather than in their amended Article. In this euphemistic piece of legislation they do not come out into the open with pronouncements against God and religion in general, but they conceal such spirit under the excuse that *fanaticism* must be driven out of Mexico, as well as *all religious prejudice*. They deny the infallibility of the Church proclaimed in the name of God, and hold themselves to be infallible. I do not know on what authority, when it comes to defining what is to be understood by *fanaticism* and *prejudice*.

"The mere words of the legislators, however, might need confirmation in the opinion of some tenacious 'good-willers,' but the facts are eloquent and numerous. In many states of Mexico the Boards of Education are demanding from all teachers that they sign an application stating that they are atheists and foes of every religion. In some other states it is expressly demanded that they pledge their unreserved adherence to the let-

ter and spirit of Art. 3 as amended, as well as to the 'ideals' of the leaders of this revolutionary movement. The ideals of the people do not count at all.

"Now the Catholic Church has always been in favor of all social and economic reforms brought about by intelligent, honest, and scientific evolution. It is in favor of the working classes, in favor of improving the lot of the proletarians, of preventing social injustice, of checking the greed of the wealthy classes, the haughtiness of the governing groups, the oppressive burden of all aristocracies and plutocracies. But all this reforming and 'new dealing' must, so the Church maintains, be brought about with no injustice to any individual or class, with due respect for all legitimate rights, without violence, without tyranny of a minority, without sheer force of arms against the innocent and the defenceless, everything carried out by way of an intelligent administration of the public interest, in peace and harmony with all concerned.

"The Revolution made of it instead a political issue and organized an army to carry out by brutal force the whimsical plans of a group of leaders with no regard whatever for the essential rights of man, for justice, for the real advantage of the Mexican nation and of the civilized world at large. And they pretend to believe—and have made some credulous people believe—that they have settled the social and economic problems as they proclaimed, but the truth is that after twenty-five years of their misrule the Revolution has been unable to settle any of these questions. The Socialism which

they preach and which they are trying to impose on the country by violence, is indeed the opposite of a real equitable distribution of wealth, of a real division of land for the purpose of creating small properties and redeeming the rural classes. The revolutionists sacrifice the old landholders; they themselves become the new landholders; they fail to create small rural properties; and finally, they nearly paralyze the agricultural activities of Mexico. Their policies are called 'Socialism,' not Fascism or Nazism, and since the ideas their Socialism implies, as well as the methods they resort to, have to be condemned by the Catholic Church, we cannot help but declare ourselves against this 'Socialism.'

2.—"In analyzing the second point of your inquiry,—the conflict between Church and State in Mexico,—I should begin by denying that there is, or ever has been, any such thing as a conflict between the Church and the State. What has been taking place since early in the nineteenth century is not a conflict, but an aggression and persecution of the Mexican people and their religious communion by political and military minorities, strongly organized, who have fallen under the influence of foreign interests, especially of Russia, and who are powerful enough to stifle the voice of the Mexican nation. If a hold-up can be described as a conflict between the gunman and his victim, then the Mexican religious question can be called such. But in all cases it must be understood that the victim of this aggression is not an extraneous body called 'the clergy' or 'the Church,' but the bulk of the Mexican citizenry, as we, the clergy, and

our faithful believers do not come from the moon or from Mars, but from Mexico. We ARE the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Mexico.

"The antecedents of the case prove the truth of my assertion. It is a fact that Mexico enjoyed the blessings of peace, tranquillity, progress, culture, true Christian civilization, according to the conditions and possibilities of the times, during the three centuries of Spanish domination. We may find certain shortcomings and imperfections in the colonial organization as in any other human product, but it is a historical fact that such faults and deficiencies as might be pointed out in the history of those three centuries, were never enough to disturb the new nation created in a wonderfully short period of time. Toward the end of the colonial period Mexico passed into the hands of politicians and military chieftains, and the country's evolution stopped, and started moving backwards at full speed.

"Favored by anarchical conditions resulting from the inadequate republican and democratic propaganda of the times, a few politicians lacking qualifications, training, and often sincerity as well, self-styled 'liberals' who were under foreign influences and devoid of national sentiments, took upon themselves the effort of compelling the Mexican nation to adopt exotic policies. The 'liberal' ideas of the French Revolution were not aimed only against the privileges of the nobility and the upper classes, but also against religion, as though religion had had anything to do with such privileges. Since that time Mexico has been the victim of the



peculiar brand of 'liberalism'—a bigoted interpretation indeed—devised by these politicians.

"The freedom invoked by the United States in proclaiming their independence was a real freedom for all, quite different from the realities and even from the theories or doctrines of the French Revolution, and especially so from the arbitrary interpretation of such Revolution made by the Spanish-Americans. The American freedom was a real blessing for a nation formed by all kinds of immigrants and political refugees coming from unsettled Europe. It was a freedom based on real equality, on homogeneity of ideals, on naturally inborn tendencies toward democracy on the part of all the inhabitants of the country.

"The situation in Mexico was quite different. The American freedom could not produce the same effects in Mexico, a nation formed and reared under a monarchical régime, with her religious unity as a blessing. It was preposterous to try and establish a republic where there were no citizens available. Therefore I think that the root of the troubles of Mexico has been the mockery of republicanism and democracy established in Mexico by a mere handful of Mexican politicians and adventurers.

"It was simply unnatural to implant in Mexico the exotic idea of a Federal Republic, for instance. Such a plan could never work. Mexico had never been a confederation of states. To adopt the federal system was to divide into many parts what was a unit. In short, Mexico has been compelled to live all along a life of

deception and lies, of artificial institutions, of extraneous ideas and practices, all of which has been made still worse by the fact that the democratic principles were perverted in Mexico by the politicians.

"History confirms this: the Mexican people have never been allowed to take any real part in such fundamental functions as the vote, the absolutism of the ruling groups having been the main scourge of the country. The self-styled 'liberals' created this situation with foreign help. Had they really been liberal, had they really created a condition of democratic freedom for all, like the freedom found in the United States, it is absolutely natural that the Mexican people, being Catholic, would have had a government composed of Catholics, or at least a tolerant one. But the fundamental purpose of the politicians would thus have been frustrated in its aim and scope, and therefore they proclaimed themselves the champions of freedom but never granted it to anyone. We have finally come to a day when the Constitution itself denies all political freedom to Catholics, which means to an overwhelming majority of the Mexican population. Catholics cannot form a party of their own; Catholics cannot teach; they cannot have a free press; they cannot hold government positions, etc.

"The so-called conflict—a real case of battery and assault—began about 1830, when the minority in power, not elected but imposed upon the nation, started to despoil the Church and to encroach upon the religious rights of the people. Catholics lost all respect for the

law at that time, since it was arbitrarily inimical to them, and so unrest became a chronic malady of the nation.

"The official complaint has always been the same: namely, that the clergy had control of all the people, and this was the source of all the trouble. But the complaint persists even after the Church has been deprived of all power, of all direct influence. The governments have never been willing to recognize, or they pretended not to recognize, that the Mexican people, being Catholic, will naturally oppose revolutionary ideas and methods, openly inimical to Catholic ideas, traditions and morals. The only logical attitude of the Mexican minority who did not agree with the national thought and sentiment would have been to quit the country, not to try and make the majority change their views and convictions by sheer force. Even now, after twenty-five years of decidedly anti-religious and immoral propaganda, when the Government saw the widespread opposition to the so-called Socialistic school, it attributed this opposition to the influence of the clergy although it was very strong in places where not a single priest remained.

"The problem confronting Mexico is one of freedom. Any government willing to recognize the rights of the people and of their Church, will remedy the situation. If the Mexican nation were given freedom to choose her rulers, she would surely do far better than the dictators who now impose them on her by force of arms.

3.—"As to Sr. Portes Gil's book, I believe reading it

should be enough to make anyone realize that blind bigotry, fanaticism, sectarian hatred, and all kinds of evil passions contributed to its composition, and its only purpose is to discredit the Church, Spain, and the Catholics. Such a book shows plainly what the Church may expect from the Mexican Government. It is easy to make a book of this type, piling into it all the charges and accusations made in five centuries by the enemies of Spain and by the universal persecutors of the Catholic Church. Fortunately, history cannot always be one-sided and prejudiced, and so truth must emerge sooner or later, as we see it in some unbiased modern historians.

"Sr. Portes Gil is wrong in many of his statements. He blames the Church, for instance, because in some dioceses she has invested funds in such civil corporations as are called '*sociedades anonimas*' (stock companies), but he fails to say that such investments were, when made, in perfect accord with the law at that time, since it did not forbid the Church to own bonds, stocks, etc. It was plain robbery to despoil the Church of these assets, thereby depriving our seminaries, schools, hospitals and asylums of their only means of support, and robbing at the same time other people who were shareholders in such corporations and had invested in them their small capital on account of their confidence and trust in such corporations.

"Sr. Portes Gil charges the Church with owning many farms. If all the landholdings of the Church are like the ones attributed to the dioceses of León and Michoacán, I can state that these many farms exist only in the

imagination of the writer. I was bishop of León for seven years, and for thirteen years archbishop of Morelia, and I can say truthfully that León had not a single farm and Morelia owned two small farms of the type called 'rancho.'

"Sr. Portes Gil says that during the régime of Porfirio Díaz the Church established many schools, colleges and academies, even in the rural districts. This time he forgot the old charge brought against the Church by his own friends, to wit: that the Church always kept the poor people in ignorance. Now he finds grounds enough for blaming the Church the other way, and says that these schools were established only for exploitation and for religious purposes. In my capacity as a bishop I can say that in the states of Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Aguascalientes and many others, all the primary schools in the rural districts were absolutely free, as well as many in the cities.

"To show Sr. Portes Gil's political attitude toward the Church, suffice it to mention the fact that he but recently issued a decree (when he was Attorney General for the Republic) ruling that all and any private property was to become national property without condemnation proceedings or any legal recourse, if such property were found to contain an altar, or that religious education were given in it, or that it was, or had been, the residence of any religious person, etc. In this way it should be very easy to confiscate all the rural and city property in Mexico, because almost all farms have a chapel or a church, and many of them had Cath-

olic schools. Under this law the whole territory of the Republic could be considered as the property of the Church, and therefore subject to confiscation!

"I can sincerely say that the Church welcomes such enemies as the author of this book. They prove to be harmless because they cannot conceal their bigotry, and so few people take them seriously. Portes Gil's book is historically devoid of truth, and politically one-sided—opposed to the convictions and will of the Mexican people.

"As for such of my letters as were pilfered from the mails by the Mexican Government, against all rights recognized even by the present Constitution, one can plainly see how hatred blinds a man to the extent of making him read in such a letter the exact contrary of what I said in it."

Immediately upon my arrival in Mexico City, I waited upon His Excellency, Archbishop Pascual Díaz in his rather barren office adjoining the Cathedral. The Archbishop is a full blooded Indian of massive proportions, very attractive in person, and in conversation restrained and reasonable. He now lives very simply in a less than modest home. All of the former splendor of the archbishopric has disappeared to outward view.

He was well posted, having in his possession reports of recent actions by the Protestant Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal boards in the United States. He said he had hoped for Protestant help, but was inclined to lose faith in such a possibility when he had discovered

recently that the Presbyterians had accepted from the government one of the Roman Catholic churches which had been closed. (I learned later that the government had taken away a Presbyterian edifice belonging to the "Independent National Presbyterian Church of Mexico" (not connected with the Presbyterian Board) and had substituted a Catholic edifice, which had been closed for some time.) The Archbishop evidently felt that there was still some inclination on the part of the State administration to use Protestantism as an additional weapon against the Roman Catholic Church.

His Excellency admitted that he was defying the law by permitting unauthorized priests to conduct mass in the cathedral. They had been driven out of their parishes and had to be cared for. One trouble, he said, was that the laws are often one thing while the regulations are another and that they appear to be sometimes in contradiction.

His Excellency stated that he would be very glad indeed to give frank and unreserved answers to any questions I might raise. Our conversation then proceeded as follows:

Question 1. "In what respect do you regard the Constitution as denying the rights of the Church and of religion?"

Answer: "If an institution is useful for the welfare of society, it deserves not only the respect of the State, but its internal rules must be respected, especially if they constitute the basis of its existence.

"The Catholic Church has, among her main purposes, the most important one of teaching Christ's doctrine, because it embodies the essential foundations of society; even if we do not consider its highest mission, which is to raise the soul to God.

"The Constitution of 1917, which is not the will of the whole Nation but of a group of revolutionists, flatly denied this right from the moment it was issued; Art. 3 prohibited the establishment of primary schools by any religious corporation or by any minister of worship; and the Government should not curtail the Church's right to have her schools, wherein she could teach that doctrine, as she does in the temples. The Government could maintain its lay schools as it did before the 1917 Constitution was issued.

"Article 3 has been amended for the worse, so that its tendencies are entirely anti-religious and atheistic. These tendencies have been openly admitted by the legislators who made the amendment, by the present Secretary of Public Education, and by the most conspicuous members of the National Revolutionary Party, including General Calles. In his speech at Guadalajara, the latter denied the Church any right to intervene in the education of children and youth, claiming that they do not belong to the home and the family, but to the community.

"But there is further interference in the Church's right to teach. Preaching is one of the principal functions of our priests and the faithful have a right to hear their preaching. However, the former are not al-



lowed to preach, *if they are not Mexicans by birth*, because according to the 130th article of the Constitution, 'to exercise the ministry of any creed it is necessary to be Mexican by birth.'

"In several states of the Republic there were European, American and Latin-American priests who, after the Constitution was issued, were deprived of their right to officiate, though by a contradiction of Arts. 4 and 130 they should have had this right, according to Art. 4. The faithful who have the right to hear sermons, whatever may be the nationality of the preacher, have thus been deprived by Art. 130 of the rights they have as members of the Church, and of the liberty of religious worship recognized by Art. 24 of the same Constitution.

"But what has been said about preaching must also be applied to the administration of the Sacraments, something inherent in the life of the Catholic Church. The law of January 4, 1926, by which Congress interpreted the provisions of Art. 130, clearly establishes in its Art. 8 that 'a person will be considered exercising the ministry of a creed whenever he performs acts which, according to the rules of the creed, can only be performed by persons invested with sacerdotal character.'

"The violation of this rule, according to Arts. 1 and 2 of the Penal Code, especially amended by General Calles on June 14, 1926, is punishable by a fine up to \$500 or imprisonment up to 15 days. Besides, the President of the Republic can expel the priest from the country.

"The Constitution violates further the Church's rights and even man's natural rights, when its Art. 5 does not permit 'religious vows' and openly declares that 'the law does not allow the establishment of monastic orders, whatever their denomination or purpose may be.'

"An institution as important as the Church needs certain means to maintain its life, such as church buildings (temples), rectories, seminaries, episcopal residences, etc., and needs money to sustain the material living of the priesthood and certain acts of worship, in the same manner that the Government itself needs personnel and money to handle the whole official machinery. The Constitution, however, in Arts. 27 and 130 has stripped the Church of her temples, rectories, seminaries, episcopal residences, etc., and even of the right to inherit and administer funds, directly or indirectly.

"The following case illustrates the manner in which the Church is treated in this connection:—the Church owned a valuable house at 8 Perpetua Street (now Venezuela Street) which was the residence of the Archbishop of Mexico. That house was seized and incorporated in the building of the Faculty of Medicine. The wealthy family Mier y Pesado donated a house at Santo Domingo Street (now 20 Brazil Ave.) for the residence of the Archbishop, and the late Mgr. José Mora y del Río lived in it until he was exiled from Mexico in 1927. The house was seized by the Government,

which very recently established there the offices of the Attorney General.

"Another instance: General Díaz' Government, in order to compensate the Church for the confiscation by the Juárez Government of a valuable building occupied by the Archbishops of Mexico as a summer residence from the 16th or 17th centuries to the 19th, gave it a house at Tacuba, one of the former villages near the Capital, now one of its suburbs. Two years ago, part of that property was taken by the Revolutionary Government, and last year the rest was taken. The present head of the Mexican Church, having no place to live in, rented a house at Colonia del Valle, one of the suburbs, but since according to a decree issued by Sr. Portes Gil as Attorney General, on February 28, 1934, even rented houses devoted to some religious purpose will be considered national property and confiscated as such, and moreover since the Archbishop had a small private chapel therein, the landlord asked him to vacate, to avoid losing the house.

"The Archbishop then rented the very small house in which he is now living, at 180 Guanajuato Street, but has just been notified to move out. Where shall he go next? He is considering securing a room in a hotel, hoping that a public hotel will not be considered an 'episcopal residence.' If he fails in this, he will have no place to live in at all.

"The same thing has happened with the Seminary. Its beautiful and valuable building and its fine library were confiscated in 1927. There being no suitable place

in which to reestablish it, the old 'Excelsior' shoe factory was rented in Tacubaya, one of the suburbs of this city. But when Sr. Portes Gil issued the aforementioned decree, about rented property devoted to religious uses being subject to confiscation as national property, the owners immediately cancelled the lease for the factory and the Seminary was dispossessed.

"One of the greatest problems of the Archbishop of Mexico at this moment is, therefore, to find a place for this Seminary, especially when the auxiliary one at Tlalpam, Federal District, was closed by the Government last week and the building, though private property, confiscated."

Question 2. "What articles in the Constitution do you regard the State to be violating?"

Answer: "In two ways the Government constantly violates the terms of its own Constitution, viz.:

"1st, by issuing decrees or laws which are unconstitutional—then claiming afterwards that it does not persecute the Church; it *'only intends to enforce the law.'*

"2nd, by ignoring entirely both the Constitution and other fundamental laws of the Republic, when this serves its purpose. A flagrant violation of the terms of the Constitution is, for instance, the reduction of the number of priests in the different states and in the Federal District. Art. 130 clearly establishes that 'the state legislatures will have the right to determine, ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL NEEDS, the maximum number of ministers of worship.' However, the legislatures, *without considering those needs*, clearly

demonstrated by statistics produced by the respective prelates and the parish members, made reductions as absurd as ONE priest for a HUNDRED THOUSAND inhabitants, or ONE for FIFTY THOUSAND inhabitants (as in the Federal District), sometimes one for enormous areas without highways or other convenient means of communication.

"It is not only the Catholic Church which claims those laws to be 'unconstitutional.' The same view was taken by the Secretary of the Interior in his Decree No. 33, dated August 15, 1929, issued by order of Sr. Emilio Portes Gil, then President of the Republic, when he signed an agreement with the Pontiff's Delegate to put an end to the religious conflict, in June, 1926. Sr. Portes Gil was the first to violate this agreement, a short while after.

"Regarding the Federal District, the restrictive law dated December 21, 1931, is not only unconstitutional for that reason, but because the Constitution does not give Congress the right to reduce the number of priests. This was clearly brought out by the lawyers who helped the faithful in their effort to secure an injunction from the courts against that law. They pointed out in detail the different articles of the Constitution violated by the law and by the authorities. The courts and the Supreme Court of Justice nevertheless denied the injunction (*amparo*).

"Another example can be found in the very recent law issued by President Cárdenas, prohibiting the use of the mails for publications containing religious in-

formation and even private letters referring to religious matters. The whole Mexican press editorially condemned that law declaring that it violates Arts. 7, 16, 24, 25, and 130 of the Constitution.

"Daily the Government violates Art. 4 when it interferes with the *professional work* of priests; and when it interferes with the activities of Catholic and non-Catholic printing offices, by depriving them of the right to use the mails to send out printed matter bearing on some religious subject or work, and by seizing the shops, as has been done with a very important private printing office at Tlalpam, Federal District.

"Art. 16 is violated every time a private school and its teachers and pupils are searched, only on suspicion of being Catholics, not only without regarding the formalities required by said Art., as one of the guarantees granted to all inhabitants of the Republic, but sometimes in the most brutal and discourteous manner.

"Arts. 18, 19, and 20 are constantly violated by the arrest of Catholics as may be illustrated by three recent cases here in this city, out of hundreds which could be mentioned:

"A priest was discussing some trends of Socialism in one of the city churches. The police went after him, and being unable to locate him, arrested another priest, Father José María Araiza, and his sister. Father Araiza, though the regular incumbent of the Church in question, was very ill at the time when it happened. The two prisoners simply disappeared, until after several days the authorities finally admitted that they were

detained at the Sixth Police Precinct.—Even admitting that one priest might be held responsible for the preaching of another, he should have been arrested openly. And how was the priest's sister involved in the incident?

"The abbot of the Basilica of Guadalupe, Mgr. Feliciano Cortés, owned a valuable collection. On the pretext that his treasures belong to the Church (because he had a few statues and paintings of saints) and therefore is now national property, his house was searched, valuable objects were removed and he was sent to prison, not being released for some days. His valuables, however, have not yet been returned.

"The seizure of the Archbishop of Mexico, his companions and his chauffeur, was widely reported, and he pointed out in detail the violations of the Constitution involved in the outrage, in a respectful complaint addressed to the President of the Republic.

Question 3. "In what does the 'persecution' of the Church consist?

Answer: "The previous answers cover this question and it would be necessary to write several volumes to list all the detailed proofs thereof.

Question 4. "Why does the Church oppose the compulsory Public School system? Cannot the Church give its teaching outside public school hours and on Sundays?

Answer: "The Church has never opposed compulsory education, nor have Catholic teachers opposed it either. The best proof is that during the régime of Díaz, when compulsory education was established, the Church and

Catholic teachers had a number of schools in different parts of the Republic. In 1917 the Constitution prohibited such schools and the Church was compelled to close hers, but Catholic teachers retained theirs until the latest amendment of Art. 3 and the atheistic tendencies of the present authorities in the Department of Education compelled them to close also: not on account of compulsory education, however, but because of the said atheistic, anti-religious trend.

"The Church has never failed to keep up religious teaching outside of the public schools, and though new obstacles are placed before her every day to prevent the fulfillment of her duties in this respect, she continues working devotedly and without dismay.

Question 5. "Should the Church accept such a compromise as is suggested in the fourth question?

Answer: "The former answer covers this, but naturally the Church cannot abandon her duty of pointing out to parents, heads of families, etc., the dangers of anti-religious education, hidden behind the term: 'Socialistic education.'

Question 6. "What is there now in the 'Socialistic' teaching that the Church objects to?

Answer: "Only the anti-religious teaching of some Socialists like Anselle, Ferri, Turati, etc., only the doctrine of class war proclaimed by some Socialists like Bakunin, Marx, Engel, etc. The Church endeavored to ameliorate the condition of the lower classes centuries before the present Mexican revolutionists proclaimed the necessity of destroying religion and of hating those



who have livelihoods, as a means to help the poorer classes. It is important to note that these same revolutionists are the most important capitalists and landlords in the whole country.

Question 7. "Can you give me a general outline of the Social Philosophy which the Church would teach?"

Answer: "The one based on Christ's doctrine; the one proclaimed by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical 'Rerum Novarum'; and that issued by Pope Pius XI, entitled: 'Quadragesimo anno.'"

Question 8. "Does the Church claim the right to any temporal power?"

Answer: "None at all. The Church asks only liberty, as she has in other civilized countries; the right to perform her spiritual mission of teaching and to exercise her charitable and welfare activities."

Question 9. "Are there erroneous statements in Sr. Portes Gil's pamphlet? If so, what are they?"

Answer: "It is impossible in a few lines to show that there are not only erroneous statements, but that the whole pamphlet is a slander which ignores the great work done by the Church to foster civilization and charity in Mexico since the colonial days to the present time. Sr. Portes Gil either does not know the real history of his country, or has misrepresented it with the purpose of humiliating the Church, and the Archbishop of Mexico has already ordered one of the priests under his jurisdiction to present in a calm and scientific study an answer to Sr. Portes Gil's misrepresentations. Mean-

while, in order to judge the latter's attitude in regard to the Church, it is enough to recall that:

"a. in his capacity as President of the Republic he made an agreement with the Pope to end officially the religious conflict existing between 1926 and 1929;

"b. he declared on May 21, 1929, that the Government and he did not desire to destroy the identity of the Church, and that the anti-religious laws would only be partially applied;

"c. he made this declaration, after having promised to the Church that the Government would restore to her the confiscated temples, rectories, etc.

"d. while urging (when the agreement was first passed) that the Governors of the States return said properties, he declared through his Secretary of the Interior that the laws enacted by them and the acts of the legislatures in reducing the number of priests were considered by the Federal Government to be 'unconstitutional.'

"e. after all these facts were widely known by the whole world, he denied them, claiming that the clergy, the bishops, the Church, had simply surrendered and submitted to the anti-religious laws.

Question 10. "Is the Church willing to have religious liberty given to Protestants just as to herself?

Answer: "Not only is the Church willing, but she proved it when she filed a petition to the Mexican Congress, backed by two million signatures of Catholics, in the year 1926, stating what were the amendments she wanted in the Constitution to regain liberty not only

for herself, but for religion in general. Congress rejected that petition.

Question 11. "Does the Church object to anything in the Government's program for social reform in the Six-Year Plan?"

Answer: "Nothing tending to benefit laborers and people is objected to, provided property is duly respected and capital is not destroyed. While the present social conditions prevail in the greater part of the world, capital and labor must be duly respected, because neither of them can survive without the other.

Question 12. "To whom does the child belong first, to State, family, or Church? Or does it simply belong to Society as a whole?"

Answer: "Children belong first to their parents who have the duty to raise them and care for them physically and morally, so that they may later be honest and useful members of the State. The Church is the greatest auxiliary of parents in properly raising their children.

Question 13. "How is the Government suppressing religious liberty?"

Answer: "The first and second answers cover this question, but some other facts can be mentioned. For instance, even private worship is now hampered. The daily press shows several cases in which houses having private chapels have been confiscated, and priests celebrating mass therein have been imprisoned. The Government is also destroying independent newspapers

which have dared to criticize its anti-religious campaign, though these papers were not Catholic.

"Should an opinion like the one contained in Dr. Macfarland's questionnaire be considered as 'religious propaganda' by the Government, its author could be punished by prison from one to five years, according to Art. 10 of the Penal Code especially amended by General Calles on June 4, 1926, by virtue of which: *'religious ministers can never, in private or public meetings or in acts of worship or religious propaganda, criticize the laws of the land, the authorities or the Government in general. Violators will be imprisoned from one to five years.'*

Question 14. "What does the Archbishop ask the people of the United States to do?

Answer: "That they continue their efforts to let the world know that notwithstanding official denials and official propaganda from the Mexican Government, Catholics are undoubtedly persecuted (and indeed Protestants as well though not to the same extent) as is proved by the churches closed by the Government in several places in the Republic."

The Archbishop's office confirmed some statements that the Papal Delegate had made to me, and called my attention to a letter sent to the Attorney General last year, stating that Delegate Ruiz, as Archbishop, had in 1931 sent instructions to all his subordinates "that they have nothing to do with armed movements or violent actions." This letter from the Archbishop's

headquarters had urged the Attorney General to withdraw the charge he had made against the Apostolic Delegate when he had ordered his arrest for inciting rebellion in case he should ever return to Mexico.

Feeling that I ought to get the fullest possible evidence regarding the attitude of the Church, I spent considerable time consulting individuals and documents, securing the following information which, so far as I can judge, is reliable. While, of course, there had been previous conflict, the present attitude of the State appears to have begun with the presidency of General Plutarco Elias Calles. At about this time an effort had been made to create a so-called "schismatic" church, which later had a split, so that now there appear to be two schismatic bodies, both, however, negligible.

It is evident that the laws at this time were directed at the breaking up of the Church organization, one of them disclaiming any recognition of the "hierarchies" in the Church. Articles of the Constitution and previous laws have been constantly amended or regulated in the direction of severity. When, in 1926, the Church authorities suspended public worship, the government, declaring that the clergymen had abandoned the churches, closed the Cathedral and other churches on their own account. When private services were started in private homes they were quickly prohibited. Representatives of the Church declare that at this time the Calles government was using paid propaganda in the United States and that authors were by some means engaged to further it. For a time, what is admitted to have been "guer-

rilla" warfare was undertaken by the Catholic body known as "Cristeros," but it appears to have been short lived.

Following this regime, the succeeding President, Portes Gil, evidenced a disposal toward moderation and an agreement was reached between the State and Church. The Church representatives say that they believed President Portes Gil had acted in good faith and that there were many important modifications at that time. They appear to feel now, however, that this was done to make an impression on the outside world. As a matter of fact, as I have said elsewhere, both the Church and the State now declare that the other broke the agreement.

While there is some evidence of difference of opinion within the cabinet about 1931, it does not seem to have had any permanent effect, and in December, 1931, laws were passed by the congress of the United Mexican States determining conditions under which priests could conduct their work, naming a maximum number of priests, preventing any larger number from functioning, and providing severe fines and punishment.

Archbishop Díaz at this time addressed to the President an open letter in which he declared, "My sincere and loyal desire to maintain peace, not only between Church and State, but public peace, as well as my great interest for the reconstruction of my country, has caused me with prudence not to speak about public events so long as I could keep silent without violating my conscience." The letter, which was a very respectful docu-

ment, urged several modifications, but it is declared that it secured no results.

Following this there was a rather wholesale deportation of bishops, although church representatives declare that Mexican law only permits the deportation of "undesirable" foreigners. On the ground that the bishops and priests did not deserve this title, they declare that the government broke the law. It is alleged that at the time when the Government was accusing Monsignor Ruiz of being implicated in the murder of General Obregón, the Papal Delegate was, during that period, part of the time visiting in Washington and part of the time in Rome. They claim that this charge was made against him on the pretext that his bestowal of some charity to the mother of one of the youths alleged to be connected with the murder indicated his complicity. In connection with the Papal Delegate, another reason given for his deportation was that he was the representative of a foreign power and therefore, although a Mexican, he was technically a foreigner.

It is further alleged that the government breaks the constitution by molesting Mexican citizens who are Catholics without the judicial authority required by the constitution. It is declared that the government itself has acknowledged the mistakes of its own members and that the previous Secretary of Public Education had been expelled from that position by the President because of the wide-spread protest by parents against his sensational announcement in regard to so-called "sexual education."

There is a good deal of inclination also to point out other inconsistencies on the part of government members and their associates. Attention is called to the fact that General Calles, when he needed a hospital, selected a Roman Catholic institution at Los Angeles because of its superior standing, although at the same moment he was repressing Catholic hospitals in his own country. One is reminded also that a man, who has since entered the cabinet, declared, as reported in a Mexican newspaper, "The revolutionary Mexicans are enemies of every religion."

Members of the Mexican congress are reported in the press to have declared the necessity for giving to socialistic education enough character "to destroy all religious dogmas and every religious sect." Document after document was shown me from church sources urging permission to give religious instruction to the youth who attend State schools. Parents were urged to oppose through all proper means at their disposal the establishment of the proposed socialistic education.

Limitations of space forbid printing all of the new laws and regulations appearing during the last year and still appearing, strengthening both the suppression of Roman Catholic teaching and constructively developing the so-called socialistic teaching of the State. These laws have been worked out with remarkable exactitude.

The Mexican congress, which appears to be entirely subordinate to the President and Cabinet, is constantly receiving all kinds of anti-clerical motions. About six months ago one delegate proposed to expel "all the



bishops and archbishops existing in the country", and the suggestion was broadcasted by radio. General Calles is declared to have approved this procedure and to have intimated that the expulsion might be brought about by violence. Archbishop Díaz replied through the press, declaring that nothing had been done which the constitution of the Republic did not authorize, closing with these words:

"The National Episcopate, which does not authorize Catholics to protect the Church rights by armed force or through a political party having a religious character, has reminded its adherents of the grave obligation they have, as citizens, to defend their natural rights with all licit and legal means, provided they observe always the immutable principles of Justice and Morality."

In connection with this incident, the government seized correspondence of the Archbishop, an action which he declares was done in violation of an article of the constitution.

Among the more recent regulations and procedures called to my attention was the wantonness exercised in the taking of Church property by the government. Such property, for example, may be taken although belonging to a private person, provided it has been used at any time for any religious purpose, including asylums or schools. Apparently it makes no difference how long ago the buildings may have been used for religious purposes. It is claimed that they may be taken on the presumption that they belong to the clergy, even though without proof. Private chapels inside private residences

may be taken by the government if they are easy of access to the public.

The most recent of anti-Church laws and regulations bars the mail service for periodicals and other printed matter in which religion is the subject. The terms are as follows:

*" . . . Whereas. One of the ideological aims of the present Government is to combat, through all legitimate means, fanaticisms and religious prejudices in order to obtain spiritual freedom for the people;*

*"Whereas. In order to accomplish this, legal steps must be taken to facilitate free Government action; and for the same purpose, all legal ordinances not answering to these ideological objectives must be reformed;*

*"Whereas. For these reasons it is necessary to reform the Law on General Means of Communication, in order to prohibit circulation through the mails of all publications, printed matter, and general correspondence disseminating some religious creed. The mail being one of the most powerful aids to diffusion of culture, that public service must not be used to spread ideas contrary to cultural betterment.*

*"For these reasons, and because much of this correspondence contains unjustified and besmirching attacks on the Government and the revolutionary institutions, I have hereby resolved to issue the following decree. . . ."*

The first modification of the law reduces the class of periodical publications, thus leaving out all those which

contain religious information, and which, according to International Postal Conventions, can be registered as Second Class mail. The modified article now reads:

"Art. 530. Periodical publications which fulfil the following requirements shall be considered as Second Class:

"III. Those concerned with subjects of information, science, arts, industries, politics, economics, welfare and, in general, those of general social interest."

Regarding correspondence, the modified article is now as follows:

"Art. 541. The circulation by mail is forbidden:

"VI. Of correspondence offensive to the Nation or her Government.

"X. Of correspondence intended as propaganda or to propagate some religious doctrine."

The above provisions are declared by Catholics to be clear violations of Mexican law, which ensures to everybody the right to express his ideas freely either in writing or printing, provided they do not interfere with the rights of third persons. They also break the Constitution, which prohibits censorship, and protects mails to such an extent that violators of the mails are liable to prosecution.

The arrest of Archbishop Díaz while I was in Mexico City, and his detention overnight well into the next day, under conditions usually accorded a criminal, indicated the intention of the government or of its subordinates to continue its present policy. A record was

given me of 266 church properties taken by the government from November 11, 1931, down to March 14, 1935. In addition to these, 25 properties which are declared to have belonged to private persons, were taken by the government, up to March 7 of the present year, on the supposition that they either had been or are owned by the Church.

One of the most significant documents that I have seen contains translations of the series of laws issued by President Calles in 1926 amending the penal code, relating to religious institutions. The penalties for slight infractions are remarkably severe. For example, if an American Protestant missionary should exercise what is called "the ministry," he might be confined to prison for fifteen years. This "ministry" is defined as "religious acts", administering "sacrament proper to its religion," or publicly exposing "doctrines," or performing "proselytism." The same sort of penalties were enacted for teaching without permission.

The following articles of these laws are worth recording:

*"Art. 10th. Religious ministers can never, in private or public meetings, or in acts of worship or religious propaganda, criticize the laws of the land, the authorities or the Government in general. Offenders will be imprisoned from one to five years.*

*"Art. 11th. Religious ministers are forbidden to associate themselves with meetings of political parties. Offenders will be punished with minor arrest and first*

*class fine; in addition, such meetings will be immediately dispersed. In case of recurrence the penalty will be major arrest and second class fine.*

*"Art. 12th. Instruction obtained in religious establishments can receive no official recognition; it will have no validity in the official schools.*

*"Offenders will be forbidden to obtain any other employment of the same kind for a term of from one to three years.*

*"Any professional title obtained in violation of this article will be null and void.*

*"Art. 13th. Periodical religious publications, or those indicating marked tendencies in favor of certain religious belief either by their program or name, cannot comment on political subjects, nor may they give information about acts of the authorities or of private persons. The director of the periodical publication breaking this ordinance will be punished with major arrest and second class fine.*

*"Art. 14th. Should the periodical publication have no director, the penalty will be imposed on the author of the political comment, or of the information referred to in the former article. If it is impossible to ascertain the author, the penalty will be imposed on the manager, or head, or owner of the publication. Repetition of breaches of the provisions of articles 13 and 14 will cause definite suspension of the publication.*

*"Art. 15th. It is strictly forbidden to form any kind of political body whose name has a word or some indication denoting connection with a religion.*

Directors of any corporation which violates this precept, or any others who are at the head of it, *will be punished with major arrest and second class fine.*

In every case the authorities will immediately dissolve such corporation.

“Art. 16th. No meeting of a political character can be held in places of public worship. The man in charge of such a building who organizes such a meeting or invites others to attend, or takes part in it, will be punished with major arrest and second class fine. If he only tolerates the meeting, or conceals his knowledge of it without taking any part, he will be punished with minor arrest and first class fine. *In both cases the Federal Executive can close the premises temporarily or permanently.*

“Art. 17th. All acts of public worship must be celebrated inside the religious buildings, and these will always be under the surveillance of the authorities.

The celebration of public worship outside of church edifices will involve the penalty of major arrest and second class fine on the organizers and on the ministers who celebrate.

“Art. 18th. *Religious ministers, or individuals of both sexes who profess a religion cannot use, outside the church premises, especial garments or badges denoting their profession under penalty of five hundred pesos fine or arrest not exceeding fifteen days. In case of recurrence of the offense major arrest and second class fine will be imposed.*

“Art. 19th. A person who takes charge of a building set apart for worship must give the notice referred to

in paragraph 11 of Art. 130 of the Constitution within one month from the date of this law, or within the month following the date upon which he assumed charge.

"A person failing to give this notice will be punished with a five hundred pesos fine or imprisonment not exceeding fifteen days.

"Further, the Secretary of the Interior will close the edifice pending compliance with the Constitutional requisites.

"Art. 20th. Members of the public are permitted to denounce the offenses mentioned in this law.

"Art. 21st. Religious associations termed 'churches,' whatever their creed may be, are not empowered to acquire, hold or administer real estate or loans on the same; properties and funds at present held directly, or through an intermediary, will immediately be transferred to the Nation, and permission is hereby given to denounce those institutions so endowed.

"Persons who conceal the church properties or funds referred to in this article will be punished with one to two years imprisonment. Intermediaries will incur the same penalty.

"Art. 22nd. Temples destined for public worship are the property of the Nation, as represented by the Federal Government, which shall determine those which may continue to be devoted to their present purposes.

"Episcopal residences, rectories, seminaries, orphan asylums or schools belonging to religious institutions, convents or other buildings built or designed for the

administration, propaganda or teaching of any religious creed shall forthwith vest, as of full right, directly in the Nation, as of full right, to be used wholly for the public service of the Nation or of the states, within their respective jurisdictions.

“Persons who destroy or do any harm to the said buildings will be punished with one to two years imprisonment, and will be subject to civil disabilities.

(Articles 23rd., 24th., 25th., 26th., 27th., 28th., 29th., 30th., 31st., and 33rd. provide penalties for ecclesiastical authorities permitting or tolerating the breaking of this law in any way.)

“Art. 32nd. A municipal authority which permits or tolerates the opening of a new place of public worship without giving previous notice through the Governor of the state or territory to the Department of the Interior (*Gobernación*) will be subject to admonition, fine up to one hundred pesos and suspension of office up to one month. In the event of recurrence of the offense the body will be dissolved.”

In addition to the foregoing facts, which came to me from officials of the Church and others who were intimately informed, I may add some others which came under my own observation from day to day, as well as some further studies made entirely upon my own initiative.

A study of the newspapers, for example, indicated extreme haste and rigor on the part of the government or its subordinate officials from time to time, beginning



more particularly with the sudden arrest of the priests, of whom, I believe, about a thousand were of foreign birth. These events in 1926 undoubtedly were the cause of a considerable number of deaths.

Close inquiry developed some interesting contradictions. Several of the men in the government who were even bitter in their attacks upon the Church have families who are still loyal and practicing Catholics, more particularly their wives and mothers. Occasionally these men themselves participate in religious functions.

In the various church offices are packages of literature piled up awaiting distribution by hand, since all papers containing any reference to religion are barred from the mails. One continues to see affidavits from priests and nuns regarding the violences visited upon them, even as late as November and December 1934. Stories constantly go the rounds which, whether fact or not, undoubtedly express truth. One of the most common is that of a man, high in the government, who, it is reported, uses a crucifix to scrape the mud off his shoes.

Following his arrest, the Archbishop sent a communication to the President of the Republic, respectful in tone but declaring that he had not violated any of the laws. Up to the time I left he had received no reply, and I was told that communications of this kind were generally ignored.

I asked one government official why the priests were not permitted to wear some simple insignia and he said, "It is because we do not wish to distinguish them from

the other citizens." He was a bit embarrassed when I reminded him that inasmuch as their citizenship had been taken away from them, perhaps it would be in the interest of the public welfare to have it known.

One constantly runs into such instances as the following: The lower floor in the building adjoining the Cathedral in which the Archbishop now has his office is used as a storeroom, in which are piled altars, images, crucifixes, oil paintings and other similar religious objects which have been taken from the dismantled churches. One morning I went closer to admire a beautiful painting of one of the scenes in the life of Jesus and discovered in the corner of the canvas a seal certifying that it was the property of the government. Later on I noticed that the articles of furniture in the Archbishop's office, including the typewriters, were all marked with this seal, indicating the completeness of the legal prohibition against a church or a clergyman owning property.

On March 24th the Supreme Court rendered a judgment which gave a Catholic edifice to the so-called "Schismatic church," and in the same newspaper I read that a governor of one of the states had deposed an authorized Protestant pastor and appointed another in his place, thus apparently assuming the responsibility of a bishop. I learned on inquiry that in some states the governors were actually naming and practically appointing the clergy. Easter and Christmas have been discontinued as holidays for government employees with the substitution of other occasions or designations.

Churches are now to be found in use as military barracks. In one Protestant school I discovered that a bronze plaque had been taken down, and was told that it was because it had a bishop's name on it. One ancient church on the main avenue of Mexico City is now used for the display of cartoons, variously socialistic and communistic. In one city the Church adjoins the state school, housed in a building which was previously a convent. The former residence of an Archbishop, which is nearby and adjoining a remarkably beautiful cathedral, is used by the Governor for his executive offices. Priests declare frequently that the people urge them to come to their homes to minister to the dying, or to render service to the dead, and that they often insist on coming to their former priests, now unauthorized, asking for permission to confess.

These facts and instances lead to all kinds of surmises. The opinion is often expressed that the government is trying to incite the Church to rebellion to give a pretext for its complete obliteration. Indeed, while some would interpret the arrest of the Archbishop as a bid on his own part for sympathy, others take the view that it was done by officials of the government in order to incite Catholic insurrection, thus giving an excuse for more thorough annihilation of the Church. When Catholics turn on their radios they sometimes listen not only to anti-church, but to anti-religious diatribes of the most offensive nature. I have cited these instances to indicate the combustible material which lies around all

the time and the carelessness, to say the least, of government agents in their use of matches.

One of the most interesting disputes is that between the government and the Church as to which was really the initiator of the measures now undertaken for social reform. The Church declares that it first set the example to the government, while the government alleges that the Church did not manifest interest in social affairs until the government had initiated its plans, and that it only did so then, particularly in 1926, in an attempt to regain the power it has lost. Less partial observers declare that both the Church and the State had neglected the social welfare of the people, and that while the Church used its money for cathedrals or sent it to Rome, the State had always divided it up among the generals.

While this discussion was going on there came to my mind the recollection that when, about twenty years ago, I had been preparing a statement as to the new interest of the churches in social welfare, I had learned much concerning the work of some priests in Mexico, and particularly of one priest whose name I could not recall. I made diligent inquiry and learned that the man I had in mind was Father Alfredo Mendez Medina, S.J., now located in Puebla. On visiting him, I found a man of most charming personality and evident earnestness and sincerity. It is interesting to note that this man, who undoubtedly gained a great hold on the workers, is now one of the unauthorized priests.

I had a most interesting conversation with him. He

said that in 1912 he had made a speech at a Catholic Congress outlining the very things that the government has now taken up, including labor syndicalism. He had stood for collective bargaining, and in 1920 he organized a body for the purpose of peacefully securing the rights of labor. He had advocated farmers' syndicates and the right to strike. He found himself regarded by the workers as a labor leader, but by the land owners as an agitator. He told me that the movement which he had originated was given official recognition by the Church before the revolution.

Father Medina is anti-socialist, and his labor views are probably somewhat identical with those of the American Federation of Labor. At the present time he is forming home and family schools for religious teaching in small groups. The law does not allow him to do the teaching but he is securing lay teachers, especially women, for the purpose.

He said that his social views had been supported not only by the church officials but by a considerable body of influential priests. Copies of *La Paz Social*, the organ of the association of ten to fifteen years ago, contain articles on the agrarian question of what was probably a radical nature at that time. Among the Episcopal documents signed by the Archbishop of Mexico, there is one containing dates and documents to prove that the Catholic Church was first in the field of social reform, having begun in 1903.

It is claimed that the address of Father Medina before the Second Grand Diet of Workingmen of the

National Confederation of Catholic Workingmen's Circles, in January, 1913, contains all that is good in Article 123 of the national constitution. Some of the principles enumerated are as follows:

"OUR PRINCIPAL SOCIAL REFORMS"

"1. The preservation of the domestic home and of family life, for which the following are required as indispensable conditions:—

- a) The appointment of a professional council for every industry at a minimum salary corresponding to that received by an adult worker in normal conditions of life.
- b) A wise regulation of the work of women and children, tending to suppress that of married women and children under twelve years of age and giving assurances of hygiene, morality and safety to young unmarried women.
- c) Security for family property, which may not be attached and shall be indivisible; it shall consist not only of small rural property, but also, in other cases, of a small city habitation or of a shop for the worker.

2. Institutions which shall insure the worker against involuntary stoppages of work, accidents, sickness and the penury of age.

3. Permanent Councils of compulsory arbitration to settle peaceably conflicts between capital and labor.

4. Power to participate, as far as possible, in the profits of enterprises and even in the properties themselves, by means of paid-up shares or other methods of easy application.

5. Protection against rings and open or covered speculation which in diverse manners concentrate the national riches in the hands of the few and take advantage of the ignorance and necessity of others.

6. Facilities for the organization and protection of the middle class, by means of independent associations of private employees and of the State, of small industrialists, of small merchants, etc.

7. Efficient protection for workers in the home, above all for women and young sewing women, and to this end defense associations and professional advice should be employed when necessary.

8. Legal representation before the public authorities of the workingmen's interests by means of corporative professional delegations.

9. The Agrarian question will be treated in a special program having due respect to the rights of the landowners; we offer a complete system of reforms to insure to the industrious and honorable farmer, as far as possible, the possession and constant use of sufficient land for a decorous support of his family. . . .

Our reforms will proceed normally and gradually through successive stages, without brusque transitions and premature advances; with firm,

sustained and constant step they will march forward along the path of progress that we have outlined."

It is to be remembered in all honesty that the movement for real social Christianity in the United States did not begin very much earlier than these procedures of the Catholic Church in Mexico. While these social organizations are distinctly composed of Catholics, we need to bear in mind that practically all of Mexico is Catholic, whether nominally or in practice. Perhaps we should come near to the truth by concluding that in Mexico both the State and the Church had been stimulated in the interest of social justice and welfare more or less simultaneously.

In closing this chapter it may be well to summarize the laws and regulations now imposed upon the Roman Catholic and other churches of Mexico: Disposition of all property of every kind, prohibition of any schools and of any scientific research, inability to receive any legacy, prohibition of teaching by any clergyman in any institution, inability on the part of a clergyman to inherit anything from persons not closely related to him. A clergyman's son may not receive a legacy from his own father. No religious magazine may either comment on political affairs or give any information to its readers upon acts of the State. No burial services may be held at the grave of the dead, and no religious service may be held at a home or a funeral parlor. The participation of a clergyman, as such, in any civic meeting, makes the meeting illegal.



He may not perform a wedding in his own home, or in the home of those whom he marries. No proposed or enacted law may be discussed in the Church. There may be no seminaries to educate the clergy. Women are not allowed to serve in works of mercy as officials of the Church. The Church may not have hospitals or other charitable institutions. If a new church were to be built it would be the property of the State. The number of clergymen may be determined only by the governors of the states. The clergyman has no right to vote. The organization of young people for religious purposes is prohibited. No religious meetings may be held in a private home. Indeed, the allegation is sometimes made in legal circles that the constitution of 1917 was not designed to effect a separation of Church and State but to bring about a union, with the Church swallowed up by the State. The penalties for infractions of these laws are remarkably severe and for a large number of these cases trial by jury is not permitted.

While I have endeavored in this chapter to confine myself to giving the Church representatives the opportunity to present their own case, I have felt under obligation also to state some of the facts which appear to give their case support.

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## VII

# THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH: JUDGMENT OF THE MEXICAN PEOPLE



ONE can do little more, in this situation, than to turn the kaleidoscope. The "people" of Mexico are an inert mass. Public opinion outside the larger cities is difficult both to find and to formulate. Indeed, as has been seen, the present stability of a minority government is largely due to the lack of organization and articulation of the mind of the people, while at the same time the enfeebled condition of the Roman Catholic Church is equally attributable to the same cause. The opinions cited in this chapter will be mainly those of thinking and informed people in Mexico City and other large cities. That of the country in general will, however, be reflected to some extent when we come to consider the Mexican States and their wide diversity.

Anything like coherent Church support is largely precluded through the divisive tactics of the Government. The people are classified in civic, industrial, cooperative

and other groups, more or less under government control and influence. This sort of group cooperation hinders larger unity on such an issue as that of Church and State. Moreover, when these groups are in any way beneficiaries of the State, it adds to the difficulty of the Church. On the other hand the Church has the benefit of popular religious sentiment.

Business men as a rule either know little about Mexican political life or else they are too timid to express themselves. This is especially true of Americans. One of them even thought that he reflected the general sentiment when he said that he had no knowledge of politics, no interest in them, none in religion and none in the Mexican nation or people. He said that he was there strictly to mind his own business.

There was a very considerable tendency in criticizing the State to remind me that, however inadequate the Church may have been, it undertook education and reform long before the State did so. A man once enthusiastic for the revolution, and still committed to it, simply commented, "the government has no need to repress the Church in order to improve social conditions." The Church was still too weak to have prevented it. A lawyer, who has been at times close to the State, claimed that the State had encroached upon the family, which had the right to direct the education of its children. The Church, he said, was wrong in its policies but it is now disciplined and must compromise, and the State will be obliged to accede. He would support the

public schools if they would confine themselves to scientific teaching and avoid the subject of religion instead of being anti-religious.

Many who were severely censorious of the Church declared that its present plight was largely due to the evils of the priesthood. Others, however, asserted that the priests of Mexico were probably as much above the level of the people as the clergymen of the United States are above its people. Following a conversation in which it had been stated that priests were constantly being brought before the court, I checked up on this allegation by interviewing a judge in that city known to be neutral but inclined to be critical towards the Church. He declared that the priests on the whole, especially in the cities, were of high character. In his judgment their main weakness was due to the unnaturalness of enforced celibacy. These failings, he said, were looked at rather lightly as things to be expected. He added, however, that the priests were much above other men in this and other respects. Carrying this inquiry a little farther, I learned that in Protestant circles the Mexican ministry had had to be disciplined and sometimes members had been expelled for the same kind of failings as the priests.

It should be noted, however, that while in Protestant circles severe discipline and frequent expulsion are applied to offending ministers, the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America seldom if ever expels priests for the usual offence. Protestantism does not make any

distinction between personal character and official status, in its ministry.

Not a few men who would be called liberals or neutrals were almost enthusiastic in paying tribute to the Church. It came with the Conquerors and served to exercise restraint. We must look at the material with which the Church had to deal in the Indian population. If the Mexican Church had been slow in Social Reform, one informant remarked, so, too, had all the churches been until recently. Moreover, the Church did wisely to educate the Indian by way of his own avenues, namely those of art and worship. It is true, he admitted, that the priests taught humility and meekness at times when they should have inspired resistance to the wrongs of the people. However, he added, "the evils in the Revolution are due far more to ambitious generals than to the Church."

One man who had been very close to the government urged that I compare the heritage of the Church in the United States with that of Mexico. He had made some study of the Indian in the United States and he doubted whether we had gone any farther in elevating the Indian than had the Church in Mexico. One thing he said "is to our credit—we have not annihilated him." It was frequently observed that, while the Church had once been abnormally rich, since 1875 it had been poor, while the government and its officials had become increasingly rich. More than one person interviewed re-echoed the judgment of a former state government official who said, "We do not want the Roman Church to

regain its old power, nor do we want the present State to retain that which it has gained."

When people were asked what would be their choice as between the rule of the present Church or the present State, they answered varyingly. One woman who had travelled much in the country districts said that in remote sections the people never had had priests except for occasional visits, and that the people were getting along religiously and otherwise without them, and she added, "It is cheaper for them to have their religion without the priests." A thoughtful teacher was sure that the Church must be swept out, but regretted that the government would replace it by Communism. In answer to the argument that the Church was hindered now, and had been for several years, by its present financial and other weaknesses, the question was occasionally asked, Are they doing appreciably better in South America and did they do better in Spain where they retained their strength and resources?

I asked whether or not there were now any recognized artistic and literary exponents of the Revolution. The answer was that the artists Rivera and Orozco (to whom reference will be made later) were the only surviving artists of the revolution, that there were no poets except campaign song writers who claimed the title, and that the only expression of the Revolution in literature since 1910 had been by Dr. Mariano Azuela, the author in 1916 of *Los de Abajo* which had been translated in the United States under the title "The Under Dogs." I spent a very delightful evening with

him. He was one of the most charming men whom I met in Mexico. He said, with a tone of sadness, that he had been a devotee of the Revolution in its early days, but that he was now becoming disillusioned and that his pen refused to continue in its interest. After giving me a rather pathetic recital of personal persecutions on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in his earlier practice of medicine, he said, "I now see another autocracy taking its place." When I asked him to make his choice between the two, he answered in a Spanish phrase which means "six of one and half a dozen of the other." He was one of the most disheartened men whom I encountered.

One has heard so much from the Pope and the Roman Catholic leaders about the anti-church and alleged anti-religious activities of the Masons, that I tried to learn something by interviewing several of their leaders. Inasmuch as I was a brother Mason they were very frank with me. They all began, of course, by reminding me that a Mason, on the basis of Masonic principles and ritual, cannot be an atheist.

One high official in the Scottish Rite body, which is the only regular Mexican organization, declared that the Mexican Masons took no part in politics or in the religious conflict. He felt sure that the only Masons engaged in such activities were connected with what he termed "outlaw" lodges.

Quite the contrary view was expressed by some Masons in Mexico not connected with the Scottish Rite organization, and I was offered considerable evidence

from Roman Catholic sympathizers that men high in Masonry had been active, particularly in the conflict between State and Church. Inquiring still further, I found that the situation defied analysis. There appeared to be in Mexico a number of Grand Lodges, most of which are said to recognize each other and to have fraternal relations. American Masons are those termed "York Masons."

Some at least of the Mexican lodges are recognized by state Grand Lodges in the United States, and I understand that the Supreme Council of the Mexican Scottish Rite is recognized by both Supreme Councils in the United States. I am told, however, that the majority of the state Grand Lodges are not generally recognized by state Grand Lodges in the United States. My general impression is that one needs to be careful and discriminating as between both groups of Masons and as to individual Masons in Mexico. One thing is sure, the Roman Catholic hierarchy believe that the Masons as a whole are among their worst enemies, while, on the other hand, some Masons observed, "It is not the Masons who have been against the Church. It has been the Roman Church which has always attacked Masonry."

While I was facing this dilemma I visited a city where, on being introduced to a citizen, he gave me the "high sign," to which I responded. As a consequence I was invited to come to the lodge room and meet a group of Masons, mostly, I judge, either present or past officials. One of them, a man of very high standing in the



community, spoke for the group, declaring that they were solidly with the government on the Church question, and he rather intimated that the government was obliged to put down all religious organizations in order to put the Roman Church out of power. It may be of interest for the Masonic bodies in the United States to elucidate the position in which I was left.

I had little difficulty in securing representative opinion regarding both the political and religious situation in the officialdom of "Crom" (*Confederacion Regional de Obreros Mexicanos*). The reader has already heard from Sr. Portes Gil on this question.\* I had a long and extremely interesting conference with Vicente Lombardo Toledano, former Secretary of "Crom" and now regarded as the intellectual leader of the labor movement.

Toledano is a highly educated man and he was formerly a teacher in the National University. He declared unreservedly that labor and the workers were opposed to the Church. He said there was no proof for the allegation that the Church had attempted any appreciable social program. Its work had been confined to philanthropy, and whatever it did was for the sake of and in the interest of the Church rather than of human beings. He would not even admit that the Church had had any real social leader. He said that while there were still some practicing Roman Catholics in the labor unions, they were slipping away from the Church and he intimated that labor might develop its own religion.

\* See page 21.

Sr. Toledano is a thoroughly informed man on world conditions and movements. When I was introduced to him, he observed that two years ago he had studied the revised statement of social principles of the Federal Council of the Churches and had written several articles upon them. The Mexican labor movement, he said, depends for its progress on the United States, adding "we cannot go faster than the labor movement there." Mexican labor, however, does not accept the capitalistic system to the extent that the American Federation of Labor does. His own policy would be to reach down to the lower classes, not gradually but at once.

In answer to a direct question he replied that there was no use in relying upon governmental plans. The workers have got to do it by themselves. He does not believe that it can await any process of evolution but there must be a real revolution. He did not see how that could be avoided. He is not intrigued by the Third Internationalist Communism. Those men, he thought, are altogether too visionary. In answer to questions, he said that he had no faith in the bourgeois, and none in the above-named type of Communism, nor in the government. As a labor leader he works with the government as a matter of expediency. He then added, "We have got to create a class consciousness." As to the government, some of them are sincere, others of them are capitalists pure and simple. While he was willing to secure the help of the government, he was against the totalitarian state. Sr. Toledano indicated that we might

look for an early rise of militancy on the part of the organized workers.

Later on in the same day I was visited by a professional man of equal standing, intellectually and otherwise. When I informed him of my interview with Sr. Toledano, he proceeded with a good deal of earnestness and eloquence to present a very different point of view. He admitted that the Church had at times allied itself with the forces of capitalism, but he said it was done simply for self-protection. It was true that the workers had been exploited by these same capitalists. At the same time, he declared, the Church had ante-dated the government in social and industrial reform. That is the precise explanation for the attack of the government on the Church. The loyalty of the workers was being secured by the Church and the government wanted to capture it for itself. One reason why the State reduces the Church to poverty is that it wishes to prevent the Church from helping the workers.

Evidently having in mind my reported interview with Sr. Toledano, he said, "the workers are ground between the two, the government and the labor leaders, who are in partnership with the government." The result is that the workers are likely to go toward Communism in their opposition to both the State and the labor unions. However wrong the Church may have been in its past policy, he concluded, it is today the only sincere agency desiring to help the workers.

That same evening I met a brilliant and clever woman who is employed by the Department of Edu-

cation to visit the communities in its interest. She declared that the government is really capitalistic. The only way out is to educate the people to the ideal of Communism and to ignore both the Church and the government. She appeared to represent a small group of middleclass women who, while holding no brief for the Church, expressed the judgment that the attack upon the Church by the government is only its effort to divert public attention from the division of the spoils between itself and the generals.

Well, I still had the consciousness of an incompleting task. Those whom I had seen thus far were types of swivel-chair leaders and exponents. I therefore insisted that somebody must find for me three or four men who were at one and the same time officers of labor unions but also really day to day and hour to hour workers. I was told that my desire could not possibly be fulfilled, and that if they were found they would not talk even though they might desire to do so. After considerable insistence, however, I located four factory or other manual workers who were officials of their local unions. It needs to be noted that in Mexico the unions comprise all the employees within a given establishment, regardless of their kind of employment. These men, however, were in real working clothes. From one after the other of them I received the same reactions, although in some instances their emphases were different.

I can give an authoritative statement of their common position because, while differing at points, they

were identical in their affirmation of all the following judgments:

The government itself incites and direct strikes. Workers have no confidence in a state whose officials build palaces for their mistresses while the government itself proclaims the principles of Communism. Multitudes of workers see all this, but at the present time they do not dare resist because the government, in partnership with the higher labor leaders, is in absolute control. Such workers sympathize with the Church, often perhaps solely because they find the Church in the same fix with themselves. They have simply been enslaved. One of them said with a good deal of earnestness, "The Church did give us some freedom. The Church did teach us some high principles of morality. The Church, however mistaken in its methods, was interested in us as human beings."

The repudiation by these men of so-called socialistic teaching was similarly identical. "Not only does the government rule us with the help of our overhead labor leaders," they declared, "not only does it force us to strike against our wills, but it then enforces the settlement on us." "Tell the people of the United States," said one, "that we are the slaves of despots. The last thing that we workers want is atheism and the moral ideas of Russia. The government talks about education while it tries to dominate our entire thinking. That is not education. The loyalty of the unions is largely outward." When I put the direct questions to each of these men, Do you want the Church put out of existence?

Do you want Mexico to be an irreligious or unreligious nation? Do you want religion entirely ruled out of teaching and education? the answers were in each case a ringing "No!"

Desiring a little further enlightenment, I interviewed a former government official and laid the case before him. He was rather reticent, but he said Sr. Toledano had been at one and the same time Secretary of "Crom," a deputy, a member of the Mexico City Council, a legal Counsellor of the government—all compensated—aggregating a huge amount. Some radical students whom I met dismissed the labor leader by saying that he was simply an agent of the government. Probably the facts lie somewhere in between Toledano and his critics.

After these several interviews, I confess my heart was deeply wrung by the plight of the workers of Mexico. I have already referred to the claims of the Church, and on inquiring for certain information regarding the earlier social movements of the Church I was told that, when "Crom" was founded by Morones, he or his associates are alleged to have stolen and probably destroyed the Roman Catholic archives relating to these movements. This was at the time of the outlawing of the so-called "White Unions," which the Church people say were independent of the Church, but which actually were guided by socially-minded Jesuits. Since that time and especially in recent years, Labor, especially as represented in its leaders, has become increasingly estranged from the Church. The Government is now doing every-

thing in its power to alienate the workers from the religious life of the nation.

Referring again to expressions of personal judgments and feelings, nearly all nominal or practicing Catholics, while conceding that the Church is to blame for many things, are vigorous in the expression of their opinion that the punishment is altogether too severe. Others say that it was a regrettable but stern necessity. Several men expressed regret that I had no opportunity to move among circles of soldiers in the army whom they feel sure are temperamentally or otherwise religious in the full Roman Catholic sense of the word. Hope was often expressed that the driving out of foreign priests might have a compensatory benefit in making the Mexican laymen and women more responsible than they have been for religious work.

I had a good deal of difficulty to get Church sympathizers, who were sweeping in their condemnation of Socialism, to explain what they really meant by Socialism. They seemed about as obfuscated on that question as the Cabinet itself. The differentiation was frequently suggested as being one between honest atheists and political atheists. One government supporter made this distinction: he said that when we teach against God, we mean only the Roman Catholic God. He believed that when the Church was out of the way the people would return to religion. Occasionally a Roman Catholic would observe, "We do not care very much about the priests personally. We go simply to worship, and

the priest, to us, is merely an instrument whom we need to express our religious feelings."

There is a good deal of difference of opinion as to the contribution of Dwight W. Morrow in seeking to reach agreement between the authorities of the Church and the State. Some believe it was a really great service which was unsuccessful simply because either one or the other, or both, parties failed to keep its provisions. Others express the feeling that it was altogether artificial.

The anti-clerical attacks over the radio, declared to be sponsored and approved by the government, and in any event permitted by it, are, I think, making a good many friends for the Church.

On the other hand, there is evidence that people are beginning to adjust themselves to the new situation. It is said that in a good many of the remoter regions people are getting along without the marriage ceremony because it is so difficult to find a priest. Others will tell you that the people are willing to accept prosperity as a substitute, if the government can ensure it, as an alternative to Church and priest. As to the outcome of the conflict, one chance for the church is the possibility that differences, personal or theoretical, and conflicting ambitions, may split the government and its party.

While outwardly there is quiet at the time, no one can tell how soon the demonstrations of October and November, 1934, may be renewed. Unless the common people have had an entire change of mind and heart, they are undoubtedly nursing the injuries to the Church



and to themselves which they feel are done by the harsh measures of the government.

As to the arguments of State and Church in the two preceding chapters, both of course affirm too much, claim too much and deny too much. Each antagonist persistently irritates the other at the present moment. On the whole, however, one may say that the State is constantly on the offensive and the Church on the defensive.

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## VIII

### THE SITUATION AMONG THE SEVERAL MEXICAN STATES

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WHILE on the one hand the Federal Government appears to control the governments and legislatures of the states, judging by the rate at which the ratification of amendments to the constitution are secured, there is a very wide diversity among these states, more particularly in the matter of relationship with the churches and in their systems of public education. These variations are due to many causes, including diversity of population, their distance from the Federal District, the economic conditions and other factors, but so far as religion and education are concerned their attitudes have evidently depended very much on the strength of the Roman Catholic Church. Tabasco, for example, where the Church has always been weak, is at one extreme while Nuevo León, where the Church has for long been strong, is at the other.

The several governors take the constitution, and more particularly the amendments, laws and regulations, with

differing degrees of seriousness. In one place, where it was evident that the Protestant institutions were favored while the Roman Catholic hierarchy was disregarded, the governor is said to have observed, "The laws are for our enemies and not for our friends." In about thirteen of these states religion, so far as religious institutionalism is concerned, has been either totally or partially wiped out, including such states as Sonora and Chihuahua on the north and Tabasco and Yucatán on the south.

On the issues under discussion the states divide into three groups. These groups may be termed extreme, mediating and liberal. The extreme radical group would include Tabasco, Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Chiapas, Querétaro, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Zacatecas; the mediating group, sometimes tending towards the extreme, might be Yucatán, Durango, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Puebla; the liberal group includes Aguascalientes, Jalisco, Hidalgo, Morelos, Tamaulipas, (?) San Luís Potosí, México and *Distrito Federal*. This grouping was suggested by a recent visitor to these states, but is subject to fluctuation. The number of authorized priests in each state is shown in the tabulation in chapter III.

Tabasco and Sonora are the chief prototypes of the first group, Tabasco having been the earliest in action and the most energetic in its constancy. As has been said, this is partly due to the weakness of the Church, approaching degeneracy, but perhaps fully as much to the energy and efficiency of its former governor, who is now at the Capital as Secretary of Agriculture. This

state has turned pretty nearly everything upside down and inside out with all sorts of vagaries. In it there is no Church and no saloon. Jazz music and saxophones are said to be forbidden. Marriage is regarded simply as a social contract or convention. All this is maintained evidently more or less at the point of the pistol.

A recent visitor to this state told me that there was much in it that was admirable, however, especially in the way of social provision for the people. The former governor attempted to be constructive; in place of religious services, he established lecture courses and concerts. He has used the dialect of proletarianism both as Governor of Tabasco and in his present position, although he is said to own a good share of the products, or the profits of the products, that come out of Tabasco, on which state he still keeps a guiding if not a controlling hand. He has been wise enough to give attention to the children and youth, and they appear to be developing along his lines, in many ways to their moral and economic advantage, though in other respects quite the opposite.

The annual report of this state contains a picture of little children with their spades beginning the demolition of the Cathedral. The schools are not only anti-church but completely anti-religious. Tabasco is perhaps one of the best examples of the totalitarian tendency. No person can be a citizen unless he belongs to one of the social or economic groups permitted by the government.

Sonora comes next in line to Tabasco. It is said to be

characterized by its complete espionage on religious groups. When some of the worshippers attempted to hold religious exercises off in the mountains they were stopped by the governor. In the state of Veracruz so-called socialist groups have adopted religious forms, including baptism.

The second group may be roughly characterized as in a state of transition, with conflicting influences between extremes and moderates, but more recently tending more and more to become extreme. A recent visitor to Michoacán told me that in this state an Evangelical Christian had been attacked one day by a Roman Catholic and the next day by an anti-religious peasant, in the first instance because he was an Evangelical and in the second because he was a Christian. In this second, or mediating, group of states, the teachers are said to be the main influence in delaying the establishment of the so-called socialistic education.

Perhaps the main hope for any sort of moderation lies with the third group, although, since the policies of these states are largely determined by the governors, if they should be removed there might be a swing to the other extreme. Perhaps the most liberal state is that of San Luís Potosí. The private schools, both Catholic and Protestant, have been continued to a considerable extent. Here, as in other states, private priests are officiating in addition to those authorized. This, however, it should be added, is sometimes the case in the more extreme states. The governor of San Luís Potosí is said to have taken occasion, in the presence of President Cárdenas,

to order restored a chapel which had been taken by the government. I shall have more to say concerning this state later in this chapter.

Men familiar with the several state policies often express the opinion that the policy of General Calles has been to try out all sorts of experiments in distant places. If the governors are successful they are brought into the Federal District, as in the cases of his own son, former governor of Sonora, and of the former governor of Tabasco. Another of his sons is said to be on the way to federal office. While there is division of opinion as to the attitude of General Calles, he said at Tabasco as late as November 29, 1934, "Tabasco has set an example to the Republic; the organization created by Garrido is strongly influencing the country."

President Cárdenas has also said, "What would we not give if throughout the states of the Republic there existed organizations of women, youth, workmen and peasants, and of all those who make up our economic system, similar to those in Tabasco." A member of the Mexican bar, in a speech at or about the same time, however, declared that all liberty had vanished from Tabasco.

It is said that in the extreme states the people are learning to get along without the priests. In several instances civic festivals have been substituted for the old religious occasions, and the school teachers attempt to take the place of the priests.

I visited Guadalajara, the capital of the state of Jalisco, where, only a few days before, the university

students had held a meeting in support of the Roman Church. The gathering was broken up by members of the "Red Shirts" and several deaths resulted. In this case the student protest had been against the government's attitude toward the Church, rather than because of its suppression of academic freedom. The Congregational school continues as usual by special arrangement.

In an interview with the Secretary of State, Ignacio Jacobo, I was told that in his judgment the states were all experimenting, that no social theory had yet been evolved, and that for the time being differences of opinion must continue to exist in official quarters. He believed, however, that the moderate policy pursued in Jalisco was satisfactory, and yet he said, after all it remained at present purely a matter of pragmatism. No private school had been closed, so far as I know, in Guadalajara. I spoke on Sunday morning to a forum in the State Museum, and noticed that right before me at the other end of the hall was a life-size painting of Pope Pius, indicating that while everything had been taken over from the Church by the government, the edifice had not been dismantled.

A Sunday in Monterrey gave me an opportunity to see another of the moderate states, that of Nuevo León. I was told that about two years ago a congress was held there with a view to the establishment of a rationalist school, but it was so strongly opposed by the teachers that it failed. In Monterrey the Protestant schools still continue to function. The head of one of the latter

schools is also teaching in one of the public schools, and I was told that the government had approved the social principles contained in the Methodist Episcopal Discipline as being satisfactory social teaching. The Catholic schools are closed because they would not accept the conditions regarding teaching. The Catholic Churches, however, are open, and the Protestant work appears to be going on as usual. While this state is thus moderate or liberal, like others it places very heavy taxes on the priests and ministers, far out of proportion to those imposed upon the members of other professions.

One of the most interesting visits was to the city of San Luís Potosí, in the state of that name. This state is unique, largely due to the past and continuing influence of its former Governor, Gen. Saturnino Cedillo, apparently a full-blooded Indian. I was assured by the present Secretary of State, as well as by General Cedillo, that their present liberal policy is satisfactory and will be continued. General Cedillo expressed the opinion that the federal government is likely to revise its rigorous policies. Inasmuch as he is very close to President Cárdenas, it may perhaps be hoped that General Cedillo has justification for his optimism.

He is said to believe that the chief antagonist of the Church and religion in the cabinet, Tomas Garrido Cánabal, the Secretary of Agriculture, is likely to vacate his office. He takes little or no stock in socialistic teaching, regarding it as a sort of fad. Somehow General Cedillo, who has few ambitions but great power and influence, has managed to maintain a consistently inde-



pendent, if not defiant, attitude, while at the same time his relations with the Federal Government are said to be entirely good.

Possibly his power and influence are somewhat affected by the fact that he has at his disposal a large body of armed *agraristas*, said to amount to some 20,000 men. In any event, I understand that no Protestant work has been interfered with and that there are private schools which are practically Catholic. There are nearly as many private schools in the state as public, and as a matter of fact the parents seem to show a preference for the private schools. On visiting some of the priests in San Luís Potosí I was interested to observe that, regardless of federal laws, they were permitted to wear clerical collars on the streets. They expressed faith in General Cedillo.

In order to get the views of the educators I had a very pleasant talk with the rector of the University, who is regarded as "liberal." He declared that all intelligent people were dissatisfied with the federal government and that his University had paid no attention to so-called "socialistic" education. The students were against it, he said, and he added that new students were coming to the University in order to avoid other institutions which were tending toward adoption of the new doctrines. He was very earnest in expressing his feeling that the educators of Mexico must stand for liberty of teaching and conscience whether in religion or in anything else.

The reader can see, from even this very scanty re-

view, how difficult it is to make any prophecy regarding Mexico at the present time or to hazard a guess as to the course of events in the near future. The outcome of the present situation may depend a good deal upon the extent to which the several states, and their governors, like General Cedillo or Garrido Cánabal, continue to exert their influence. Their status, in turn, may depend upon General Calles, provided he continues to direct things, or upon President Cárdenas, or upon whoever may become the future political leader of Mexico. As it is, however, the nation is far from having any appreciable unity under the present administration. At present it is hard to tell which is predominant, the influence of the states upon the Federal Government or the latter over them.

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IX

PROTESTANT CHURCHES AND  
PROTESTANT OPINION IN MEXICO



I RECALL rather dimly an article written by a Roman Catholic, I think in 1926, in which he rebukes the Protestant bodies of the United States. He declared that while they announce their allegiance to the ideal of the sanctity of the law in this country, they were carrying on their work in Mexico in open violation of the laws. They were alleged to be doing this because they were being granted special consideration by politicians in Mexico, who were merely using them as tools in their attacks upon the Roman Catholic Church. I also remember my own impression at the time that some of our Protestant leaders were utilitarian in their attitude towards the situation. Elihu Root, then deeply interested in Mexico, expressed the same fear. Whatever may have been the facts at that time, the Protestants in Mexico are now quite likely to lose whatever immunity they may have had and to share the vicissitudes of the Roman Catholic Church.

Even Vasconcelos who as Secretary of Public Education had once expressed to me his warm sympathy with Protestant work, has recently in a book, attacked it.

We must, however, in estimating the honesty of Protestant opinion, remember that at a time when the Revolution, while anti-clerical, did not appear as anti-religious, Protestant fought in its ranks, not only with moral and spiritual weapons, but, in the days of Madero and Carranza, as combatants. In this connection, too, we must also take into account the early and the continued attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards Protestant missions. Its representatives have constantly declared that it was a mere expeditionary force to open up the way for political penetration and intervention, although, of course, if they had been well informed they would have known that Protestant sentiment in the United States has always been against intervention by our government. One is reminded of the utterances to this effect by the Rev. Samuel Guy Inman during the early days of the Revolution.

While this charge has probably become outmoded and although attacks accompanied by violence have ceased, nevertheless the Roman Church has continued its intransigence. I found tracts being distributed in the Cathedral and in the churches containing not only arguments for the claims of the Roman Church as the one true Church but also making very invidious statements. Protestant leaders say that when the Roman Church secured its respite in 1930 it took advantage of the occasion to renew its attacks. It was claimed that the

attitude of the Government had been due to Protestant influence, and in some cases even boycotts were attempted. I found that literature is being distributed at the present time repeating the time-worn attacks upon the moral character of Luther, Calvin and other ancients. There are even intimations that Protestantism not only never goes beyond the limits of natural goodness, but that its effect is deteriorating to moral life.

Officials of the Young Women's Christian Association say they believed an understanding existed between the Apostolic Delegate and themselves that the Church was not to interfere with the work of the Association. The Delegate, nevertheless, issued a pronouncement that no good Catholic should join either that organization or the Young Men's Christian Association.

In this connection, in honesty, we need to recall Protestant attacks upon the Roman Catholic Church, not only in Mexico but elsewhere. In any event, there is undoubtedly a change at the immediate moment on the part of the Roman Catholic leaders, who are now seeking Protestant sympathy and support in the United States. I think some change in the Protestant attitude will also be discovered later on in this chapter. Protestant institutions are now gradually, if not rapidly, sharing the same experiences as the Roman Catholic Church.

So far as the government is concerned, one member of the cabinet told a friend of mine that his only reason for preferring Protestantism is that it is an approach to atheism. The Young Women's Christian Association, which has cooperated to no small extent with the Gov-

ernment in social work, has done so not with any recognition by the government as a Christian organization but in its capacity as a body for social service. There is now some discussion as to whether or not, in order to continue, it may need to leave out the word "Christian" and become the "Young Women's Mexican Association."

Since its establishment in Mexico thirty-three years ago, the Young Men's Christian Association has always received the cooperation of the Mexican Government. This cooperation has been given entirely regardless of political factions. At one time men of three different factions occupied places on the Board of Directors. Political discussions were always left outside the Association entrance, and the three were good friends through many years. One of them is no longer living, but the other two are still good friends, though no longer members of the Board.

Last year the Association in Mexico City had a strike which lasted sixty-eight days. The head of the Federal District Government finally arbitrated the difficulty in the fairest possible way. The strike should not be interpreted in any sense as an indication that the Association in Mexico is in fundamental conflict with the Labor Movement. The difficulty arose from a division among the employees, and the difficulty was between persons and not between the Association and the Labor Movement.

The Association in Mexico is, however, contemplating the complete transformation of its work, for it is

clear that its present large organization, with more than a hundred employees and with an extensive and expensive building program, does not fit in well with the new day in Mexico. It proposes to shift its big physical program to the out of doors, to develop more and more volunteer service, to intensify its camp work, and to limit its building program to a very simple educational social and spiritual program in a small down-town center.

I suppose that proportionately at least as many Protestant institutions have been closed as Catholic, with the exception of the schools. All manner of problems are now arising. Members of a previous administration had advised Protestants to put their schools under the control of detached corporations, with the understanding that they might be continued. This has now been reversed, and the government is saying these schools are Church property and must be taken over by the government.

Tragic reports come from the extreme states. In Tabasco, during a small riot, an Evangelical was recently thrown from a cliff into the river by soldiers, and incapacitated for life. One of the saddest experiences has been the tendency of Protestants to become renegades, sometimes for the purpose of getting political office. In Tabasco and other similar sections they have served the government as spies in Protestant circles. It too often happens that if a Protestant secures an official position he will detach himself, either fully or partly, from Protestant connections. On the other hand, there are

some splendid exceptions, and there have been Protestants who have declined office in loyalty to the Church.

Interviews with a considerable number of Protestant leaders brought out considerable variety of opinion. There was but one Protestant leader who appeared to take a utilitarian view. He said, "We have nothing to do with politics and we observe the law. The attacks on the Church really help us." He had no concern with Roman Catholic liberty and added, "We are simply taking advantage of the occasion." I do not think, however, that his words implied all that would appear. He was thinking of the situation in terms of service. Occasionally a Protestant, usually a Mexican, would dismiss the matter by saying, "The Catholic Church is simply getting what was coming to it." As a rule, however, the Protestants were thoughtful and restrained, and on the whole sympathetic with the Roman Church in its immediate situation. One of the most thoughtful leaders said, "Let us hope that these experiences will reform the Church and thus bring support from the multitudes who have been indifferent to it."

One of the most responsible representatives has made this analysis:

"Up to the present time the Mexican government has noted a clear difference between the attitudes of Protestants and Roman Catholics toward the Revolution. On the one hand, the Protestants as a whole have been loyal supporters of the progressive revolutionary policies and have endeavored in every way to obey the laws in regard to ministers, public worship, nationalization of



church properties, etc. On the other hand, the Roman Church has systematically opposed social progress and the limitation of the Church's power by the new laws, and has hesitated neither to disobey these laws nor to lend its support secretly to various counter-revolutions. While we believe that it is very important to uphold fundamental rights of conscience, yet we are inclined to think that any one who thoroughly understands the whole history of the Roman Catholic Church in its political and social policies in Mexico would hesitate to ally himself with Roman Catholics in this matter, knowing that the Roman Church has been in many ways the bane of Mexico and the most serious hindrance to her intellectual, moral and social progress, as well as to the establishment of real liberty of conscience.

"The religious situation is not simple. One cannot say categorically what is going to be the position of the government on a number of points. It is true that the Mexican Protestant Churches, as well as the Missions, have been alarmed by the rapid growth of anti-religious agitation and by certain symptomatic actions of the government. A short while ago it seemed as though the radical fire begun in Tabasco was going to sweep over the country. That does not seem so probable now. The wording of the newly-reformed constitutional article on education does not *necessarily* involve atheistic or general anti-religious teaching, and it remains to be seen just what the application of the law will be. At present, there are two clearly-defined tendencies within government circles and the controlling political party:

the one tendency is radical, atheistic, fanatically anti-religious; the other is moderate, anti-clerical, but *not anti-religious*. It is impossible to predict which of these tendencies will triumph, but recent indications have been to the effect that the policies of the new President will be fairly moderate, and that the new education, while tending to destroy superstition and religious fanaticism and blind submission to the priests, will not, except when applied locally by extreme radicals, attack religion itself. A while ago there was widespread fear that the government was going to close all church buildings and forbid all public worship of whatever kind, as has been done in Tabasco and one or two other states; but this has not been done in the country at large, and there are a good many indications that it will not be.

“The interpretation of the laws varies greatly from one part of the country to another. For example, in and around Mexico City, and in many other centers on the ‘mainland,’ foreigners are able to preach in church services, if they are presided over by a Mexican, even though a former decree forbade any kind of public propaganda of a religious creed by a foreigner; whereas in Yucatan and Campeche a foreigner would run serious risks if he accepted invitations to preach in public. On the other hand, Mission schools in the Federal District have been so hampered by the government that their usefulness has been practically destroyed, whereas in Yucatan and Oaxaca Mission schools have been able to carry on a truly Christian program without inter-

ference from the local officials. Right now the governor of Morelos is allowing only one Protestant church and one Catholic to be open in the capital city, Cuernavaca, interpreting the law to mean that all Protestant churches form one 'sect' and the Catholic another. On the other hand, the interpretation of the Federal authorities has always been that if the law allowed, say, ten priests or ministers to each religious denomination in a certain state, this meant that the Catholics could have ten, the Baptists ten, etc. So there is no uniformity of interpretation, and not only so, but one cannot tell from one day to another how soon local interpretations will be changed. One is kept on the anxious seat most of the time, but in spite of this, Christ's work is going forward and the common people are hearing the Word gladly.

"To sum up, then: it is not at all clear as yet whether the real policy of the present administration is to be anti-religious with suppression of real freedom of conscience and worship, or merely anti-clerical, with strict control of the priests' activities and with severe reprisals, as in the states of Veracruz and Hidalgo (where such resistance resulted in the government's closing all Roman Catholic Churches). Those who know what the rôle of the Roman Church has been in Mexico, not only before the Reform Laws of Juárez established freedom of conscience and worship, but ever since that time, opposing at every step the efforts of liberal administrations to free the people from clerical domination, cannot but feel that the latter policy would be

simply the just due of the Roman Church. We therefore believe that for Protestants to unite with Roman Catholics to exercise pressure upon the Mexican government will only tend to make this government class Protestants with Roman Catholics as opponents of all real progress, intellectual or social, and might result in the government's treating our Protestant churches with the same severity as it has the Roman Catholic. We would venture to suggest that the wise attitude for friends of Mexico to assume is that of patient waiting, of sympathetic study of her problems, of earnest prayer that the new President may be truly guided by God to choose that path which will in the end serve most truly the welfare of this great nation."

More than one Mexican pastor felt that, no matter whether Church or State wins, the result will be bad. "Our hope that the Protestant element in the government would help the situation seems to be dispelled." On the whole, I should say that Protestant leaders were gradually losing faith in both government and Revolution. There is a good deal of difference in opinion as to what should be the Protestant attitude. Some leaders express the feeling that the Protestant element ought to stand side by side with the Roman Catholics to secure liberty, regardless of past history. One layman, an Anglican, expressed the feeling that had the Protestant forces stood solidly with the Roman Catholic near the beginning of the last concerted attack it would at least have restrained the government. He felt that the silence

of Protestants tended to strengthen the hands and minds of the cabinet.

When, early last year, there appeared foregleams of what is now transpiring, an interdenominational conference was held at Coyoacan March 16-17, 1934, to consider the question of educational institutions. The problem was faced realistically and the new conditions considered in detail. Among the tendencies noted were: the assumption of education as a function of the State, materialistic and anti-religious instruction and the nationalistic spirit which would restrict the service of foreigners.

The problems were considered as those of moral principle, of policy, of administration and of legal protection.

The principles for guidance were: the maintenance of evangelical truth and tradition; consideration of the needs of the people; adaptation to new conditions by the creation of Christian social centers, student hostels, the enlarged circulation of Christian literature, and the continuance of education through these agencies, to be substituted for that of the schools, if and when these are closed.

Most of the Protestant agencies are just now living from day to day. On occasions when new infractions on liberty were made they interviewed the officials. A good many questions are frankly raised in Protestant circles. The question was put, how far have Protestant schools really been an evangelical influence? It is asked why they have not had more effect on the anti-religious

movement. The government has already passed a law restricting the circulation of literature, and some persons prophesy that ultimately it will take away the Protestant churches, close out the ministry and eliminate the missions.

That the schools will go eventually is the general impression, except in a few particular localities. The difficulty in determining a policy is two-fold—the lack of both denominational and geographical unity. Co-operation has been good, so far as the division of the field is concerned, although there are instances, as in the case of Monterrey, where some of the churches declined to accede to the territorial distribution. The National Council of Evangelical Churches is not an active body. The group in Mexico City meet for conference, and its Secretary, G. Baez Camargo, is an effective personal force throughout the entire evangelical field.

Wilfrid Hardy Callcott\* states that: "One of the outstanding members of the Calles cabinet frankly said in November 1928 that he thought Protestantism had lost its greatest opportunity through failure, in some way, to seize the exact moment." He also added that: "Protestantism, by its Anglo-Saxon division into sects, which to the Mexican are largely artificial, is sadly weakened." Further he expressed the opinion that the satisfaction expressed by some Protestant workers over the difficulties of the Catholic Church injured the effectiveness of Protestant work.

\* *Liberalism in Mexico, 1857-1929*, by Wilfrid Hardy Callcott. Stanford University Press, 1931.

The general disposition appears to be to advise restraint in the United States. Most of the leaders feel that at present it is impossible to take sides in Mexico either with the government or the Catholic Church.

The nearest approach to a constructive policy that came to my attention was that of the Congregationalists, which is as follows:

PROGRAM ADOPTED BY THE ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES HELD IN GUADALAJARA  
MARCH, 1935

The Gospel is eminently social and is superior to any other plan which aims at social redemption, as has been shown by universal human experience through successive ages.

No social program which denies or neglects the fundamental teachings of Christ can satisfy human needs.

Social work is one way of attaining the aim of personal and collective salvation.

*Program*

I. *Evangelistic*

1. Where churches are open. Be prepared for the possibility of the closing of the church by discussion and making plans for the types of work that can be carried on in such an emergency.
2. Where churches are already closed.
  - a. The church shall organize itself in the form best suited for conserving fraternal fellowship among its members.
  - b. Activities of the members.

- The members shall visit each other frequently, taking as the theme of their conversations some topic from the Bible and dedicating some moments to prayer.
- Each head of a family shall become the minister of the home, bringing together the members of the family daily for Bible study and prayer.
- Every member should be an evangelist, and where possible the members should organize themselves in study groups.
- Members shall contribute to the economic support of the work.
- c. Activities of the pastor.
- More emphasis on pastoral calls, paying especial attention to the sick, sorrowing and needy.
- Instructing families in home worship.
- Distributing literature helpful in such worship.
- Intensifying the work of personal evangelism.

## II. *Social*

1. Medical work in cooperation with existing institutions. Clinics. Lectures. Sanitary Brigades.
2. Cultural work.  
Clubs. Literary Societies. Night Classes. Libraries.
3. Recreational activities—wholesome diversions.
4. Physical activities.  
Camping. Athletics. Boy and Girl Scouts.

## III. *Preparation of Leaders* for evangelistic and social work, by means of:

- 1—Camps. 2—Normal course in religious education. 3—Institutes held by the Union Seminary.



4—Influence of the pastor, through informal meals together and excursions.

- IV. There should be a place in each region adapted for the carrying on of institutes on the part of the Seminary.

The Executive Committee of the National Council has issued and distributed a printed statement.\* It is in the main an analysis of Protestant principles, such as would appear almost anywhere. I will, therefore, limit my extracts to points on which it deals with the immediate situation.

“Evangelical Christianity, known as Protestantism is innately a work of moral emancipation and spiritual freedom. It aspires to revive in the Christian life the practice of the Apostolic sincerity of the Gospels. It does not seek an intellectual devotion to dogmas, nor entire submission to Ecclesiastical authority; but does seek to implant in souls the Christian spirit—the Spirit of Christ—which was Christ’s object and revealed in his teachings as the inward dynamic principle, the inspiration and safeguard of conduct, which as essential principles in operation shall gradually transform and elevate Society and Individual Life by natural and gentle progression. (Agusto Sabatier.)

“The Soul of Protestantism in its depths is spiritually revolutionary.

\* El Cristianismo Evangelico en Mexico (I have a complete translation of this important document).

"The Protestant movement adopts a nature suitable to each country where it develops.

"Mexican Protestantism thus constituted must hold itself to the Light of its Historic Tradition, to its serviceable application in practice, and to its relation to Society in general.

"With the consolidation of the 'Liberal' Reform there were noted Liberals of good repute and some ex-Catholic prelates dissatisfied by the Conservative (as opposed to Liberal) practices of their (R.C.) Church, who began an active and vigorous work in favor of Religious Reform. Among the most active Directors of this incipient movement was Sóstenes Juárez a near relative of Benito Juárez. In this way was Protestantism initiated in Mexico. The triumph of Liberalism confirmed the separation of Church and State, assured the liberty of conscience and of worship as granted by the Constitution of 1857. The movement grew stronger and stronger, all the time gaining force in spite of the violent persecution Fanaticism unloosed against it. The Protestant Church, with its diverse divisions (denominations), has never had financial holdings and has never been an economic power, never has had great material interests nor owned resources of production to the extent of endangering established policies or the financial welfare (economic health) of the country. Therefore there do not exist, properly speaking, for Protestant organizations, problems of Ecclesiastic possessions and the disentailment of unproductive estates.

"The victory of the Liberal Reform party in 1857

and its proclamation of Religious Liberty, found Mexican Protestantism linked with the Liberal cause, as it had been from the beginning. The banner of the Liberal Party became the Standard of Mexico, and National Protestantism (inherently liberal and democratic) at once identified itself with the spirit and Historic Tradition of Mexican Liberalism.

"The Protestant Rural School was the forerunner of the great movement of Rural Education and the incorporation of the native Indian (the indigenous population), which now forms part of the constructive program of the 'Revolution' and which is an indisputable honor to Mexico. By preference Mexican Protestantism has gone to the Indian, to the working classes and to the poor. This interest and this solicitude are not born of the present time, when the protection of the working man and the redemption of the Indian have an intimate place in the Social conscience, but date from the epochs in which the political and social tendencies were in favor of the privileged classes, while the Indian, the Rural population and the working people were forgotten.

"Mexican Protestantism, professing Evangelical Christianity, should not only seem to refuse, but should energetically repel, all thought (or intention) of direct or of organized entrance of any of its religious divisions, of whatever denomination, into the field of politics. The aspiration of Evangelical Christianity, so far as the political life of a country is concerned, is that in this

relation, as well as in all departments of collective life, it shall accept and practice the spirit of its elevated moral standard. But it declares itself opposed to all ecclesiastical interference in active politics and still more opposed to any form or grade of control, civil, political or State, exercised by ecclesiastical authorities. It believes in the same way (decidedly) that the State should not have a religious creed any more than the Church should have a political creed. Also, the State owes respect and guarantees (as declared General Calles in his discourse in Morelia, May 14, 1924) to all the religions and all the beliefs so long as their ministers do not take part in our political contentions to disparage our laws, nor serve the powerful as instruments to exploit the weak. Also, the Church owes recognition and respect to the established State."

Its Social Program includes the following principles:  
 "The Supreme Value of the Human Personality (The Supreme Value of the Recognition of Man as a Human personality).

The Feeling of Brotherhood the Foundation of Human Relations.

Conceptions of the Elements of Society. (An idea of the obligations of the Different Parts of Society to Each Other.)

Cooperation Instead of Competition.

Love the Motive of Service, Instead of Money.

Spiritual Worth the Supreme Value.

Lands and Riches as a Sacred Trust. (He Who Has

Riches and Lands Holds the Office of a Sacred Trust.)

The Real and True Root of Evil Is in the Heart.

Violent Tactics Never Succeed in the Extermination of any Social Evil.

"With these antecedents, and although the Evangelical Churches, faithful to their doctrine of no Intervention in political matters, withheld themselves from participation as a body in the strife, yet, in 1910 when the 'People's Cause' led by Madero, took form as the 'Liberal Movement,' the Protestant elements were ideally prepared to identify themselves with it, and many of them actively joined the Revolution. After the assassination of Madero and the second stage of the Revolution had developed with tendencies still more clearly Social (democratic), the Mexican Protestants not only sympathized anew, but again contributed their contingent of men for the strife. From among the Methodists went forth—to carry their quota to the Revolution—men from the ranks of those in modest employment to men in high official position; from humble soldiers to Generals of Divisions. In one of its departments the Mexican legislature had, in proportion to the numerical minority of Protestants, a greater number of representatives of Protestant extraction than of any other organized group.

"Faithfully sustaining the principle of no Ecclesiastical connection with State affairs (politics), the Protestants who have enthusiastically filled the ranks of the Revolution have not done so to defend 'Party' interests nor to seek privileges due Protestantism. Their only

impulse was their spiritual affinity with the Revolutionary longings of the People and their desire to help the cause of Social Redemption. Neither have the Protestant Churches sought, by action contrary to their tenets of no political-church domination, to make use of their services to the Revolution as instruments of temporal power, nor would they, in justice to, or consistently with the Protestant education they had received, ever descend to lend themselves to such expectation of reward. In those critical moments when the National sovereignty of Mexico had been threatened by the intrigues of the powerful financial interests, and the enemies of the Revolution near to the Government of the United States of America—even approaching an international conflict with fatal consequences—the Mexican Protestants without ostentation and without selfish motives assumed a patriotic attitude and did their part to avoid the said conflict.

“In the conflict of 1926, when, in the United States of America, organizations determined on intervention voted millions for propaganda to that end, the Mexican Protestants, efficaciously seconded by our co-religionists on the other side of the Bravo, made active counter-propaganda by means of the circulation of pamphlets, rectifying newspaper notices, speeches and conferences.

“At the present time, when the problem enters new fields and assumes, by reasons already well known, an openly materialistic front, which the Mexican Protestants cannot look upon without profound apprehension, we wish, nevertheless, to maintain our position of clear understanding and good judgment. We believe the

tendency toward materialism is a phase, sharp but transient, of the conflict which seems to us as a violent reaction against the antiquated type of popular religion that prevailed among us. We cherish the hope, however, that this tendency, like all negative indications of feeling, cannot be permanent either in the human nature, or among any group of the two races from whose conjunction our people proceed, and will not remain as a real substance definitely implanted in our great movement of social emancipation.

“For our part, we believe the best method for emancipating the popular conscience from superstition and fanaticism is to cultivate a new spiritual consciousness capable of enlightening the mind and ennobling the soul, and which, above all, should constitute a dynamic motive to strive for justice, for truth and the general welfare, and which offers a solid basis for the conception of, the keen sympathy with, and the practice of, a genuine Social solidarity.

“We believe that that type of elevated, dynamic social Christianity is found in the original Christianity of Jesus—free of those mental deformities unknown to His spirit and His teaching, but which (deformities) have come down through the centuries by many influences, and among them, as principal, the appearance and development of an imperious ecclesiasticism that has obscured by temporal ambition its spiritual mission; and which, frequently betraying the Evangelical Christ of the oppressed, has placed itself at the com-

mand of the oppressor and of the privileges bought with blood and money.

"‘If the children of Mexico are to be Christians,’ said the Procurador General (Attorney General) of the Republic, Lic. Portes Gil, ‘let them drink the doctrine from the pure fountain of the Words of the Master which are in the Gospels.’ (Spoken at the time of the consignment to the Law of seditious elements.) Without pretending that our nucleus of Protestantism has completely reached our ideal, we can be assured that the Genius (disposition) of Protestantism consists of an aspiration for a return to the religion of simplicity, powerful and revolutionary—the Religion of the Christ of the Gospels, which has been the theme of our religious work. We believe that this superior type of religion, severed from ecclesiastical ambitions for political and temporal power of any kind, would be no obstacle; but, on the contrary, it should be the strongest incentive (and most powerful means) for the social transformation and the economic (administrative) improvement, mental and moral of our people.

"We believe that no movement of Social (material) transformation will be completely able to accomplish its object if it limits itself to purely intellectual and economic considerations; and in this sense we believe it to be our patriotic and Christian task to arouse in our people a moral regeneration and a spiritual renewal, co-operating at the same time, to the extent of our resources and possibilities, for their liberation, mental and material (economic).



"By our Historic Tradition and by our social relations we declare categorically, and once for all, that we have not been, neither are we, nor will we ever be, within the ranks of the reactionaries. The spirit of our movement is constantly forward, truly progressive. It is the spirit of incessant renovation—like life itself; the spirit of unceasing strife for prosperity and justice as was exemplified in our Master. We are ready with our modest contingent to support all that tends to dignify our people and to improve them—especially as relates to morality and National reconstruction.

"Sustaining our Evangelical standards of conduct and procedure, we shall always be governed by patriotism, by cooperation, by order, by peace, love and sacrifice. We aspire always to be a positive factor of progress, of moralization and of spirituality in the Historic evolution of our people, with whom we are profoundly united; and of our Fatherland, with it—as we are, lovingly identified.

"With this pure heritage of Tradition, with these high ideals, and with this conscientious course of conduct, Mexican Protestantism looks serenely into the future from its humble sphere of action, with an immovable faith in the tenets it professes and in the high destiny of Our Native Land."

There appeared to be general agreement among several members of the Protestant group in Mexico City that the following statement would constitute a fair representation of more concrete Protestant sentiment in

Mexico, although individual judgments and opinions vary considerably.\*

### ORIGIN OF THE ANTI-RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT IN MEXICO

"The struggle between the Government and the Roman Catholic clergy is no new thing in Mexico. For decades, the anti-clerical movement has been one of the significant forces in the country, and the political history of Mexico has resounded with accusations hurled at organized religion as represented by the Roman Church, and particularly the hierarchy.

"First of all, there is stressed the fact that for centuries the Church used its power over the people for the acquisition of an incredible proportion of the country's wealth; that at one time the Church, through grants, bequests or purchase, had become the owner of from one-third to one-half of all the real estate of the country; that costly buildings were erected, sometimes by the willing labor of the peasants, at other times through labor secured by appeals to the superstitious fear felt by the people; that this property was used for selfish ends of the clergy rather than for the good of the people and of the country.

"With equal force it is affirmed that the clergy have charged exorbitant fees for the ministrations supposed to be necessary for happiness both in this life and the life to come; that these fees have been extorted from

\* While this analysis contains matter appearing elsewhere in this volume, it seems necessary to include it.

the poor through the insistence that without the ministrations of the Church their own souls and the souls of their loved ones would be eternally lost; and that these large sums of money have gone partly to the support of a numerous and avaricious clergy here, while great sums have been sent to Rome.

"Attention has often been called to the part played by the Roman clergy in the turbulent history of Mexico, due to the determination of the Church to retain its authority and privileges at all costs; it is affirmed that the Church has not hesitated to ally itself with reactionary elements, both military and aristocratic, and to plunge the country into civil war when by so doing it thought it possible to conserve or advance its own interests.

"The traditional policy of the Catholic Church with regard to other religious groups has not served to commend religion to the present generation. That policy, so far as official pronouncements and official acts are concerned, has been one of unrelenting persecution. The Inquisition is now a thing of the past, but its very mention still causes people to shudder. In more recent times, and down to the present, its historic attitude has often been manifested. The testimony of sixty martyred Protestants (some of whose lives were sacrificed within the past few years), and efforts against the lives of Protestant workers even as late as a few weeks ago, witness to the methods used to prevent any teaching except that of Rome from being propagated. While among the liberal Catholics of Mexico there are some

very fine individual examples of Christian tolerance, one searches in vain for any expression, on the part of the Catholic Church, of a willingness to accord to other religious groups any of that liberty of belief and worship which it so loudly demands for itself.

"The critics of religion in Mexico point significantly to the fact that, after more than three centuries of practically complete domination by the Church, the country came to the beginning of the present revolutionary period with a population eighty-five percent illiterate, and submerged in poverty. The pitiful condition of its multitudes of believers contrasted eloquently with the wealth and power of organized religion as represented by the Church. Not only had the Church been guilty of neglecting the education of the masses, but of opposing efforts put forth by the State and by other agencies in their behalf.

"No study of the historic basis of anti-religious sentiment in Mexico, however brief, would be complete without mention of the impression made upon the popular mind by the character of the clergy. Not so much is said on this point by the present critics of religion, probably because this movement just now is not greatly interested in moral considerations; but there can be no doubt that the Roman clergy has failed utterly to command the respect and confidence of large sections of the population, or to exert any considerable influence for moral training or practical Christian living.

"The anti-clerical sentiment, for so long a potent factor in Mexican history, has more recently become re-

in intellectual leadership. The modern scientific movement in Mexico has just reached the militantly materialistic stage. The behavioristic psychology has seemed to thinkers of this type to be the definite and unanswerable climax to the anti-religious suggestions of physical science. To this school of thinkers, religion is a superstition which binds men's minds to outworn and discredited beliefs, and even seeks by force to prevent the liberating discoveries of science. The chief purpose of education becomes, therefore, the spiritual liberation of the people through the destruction of all religious belief, and the inculcation of an exact and scientific idea of the universe—by which is meant a strictly materialistic view.

"The practical economic problems which have come to the front during the past few decades have also influenced very decisively the attitude of the revolutionary element toward all forms of religion. The peasant in his isolation and poverty has been awakening to the vast difference between his conditions of life, and those of other sections of the population. The worker in the city has come to feel that he is not receiving the due proportion of the fruits of his labor. Add to this the fact that both the landlord in the country and the employer in the city are frequently foreigners, and the racial factor serves to increase very materially the sense of injustice and discontent. The two groups—laborer and peasant—have found themselves standing on common ground. The catchwords of the Marxist social philosophy have been so used as to become a part of the

thought and daily conversation of many even of the comparatively uneducated of the common people. All these charges laid at the door of religion are related thus to the all-comprehensive, and (to the Marxist) irrefutable, assertion that religion is the tool used by the upper classes to postpone and defeat the inevitable struggle of classes through which alone the age of real human cooperation can be ushered in. Add to this situation the declaration by the materialistic scientist on the one hand, and by the designing politician on the other, that all the economic ills of the country are due to organized religion, and that all forms of religion are alike opposed to economic betterment and to social justice, and one has before him some of the more potent factors of the present anti-religious movement.

"An impartial statement of the case requires mention of the fact that within the movement just described there are certain influences which attempt to destroy those moral sentiments which have always been considered to lie at the basis of social progress. The most glaring of such efforts are those directed against the sentiment of respect and obedience of children to their parents, and against the Christian ideals in regard to relations between the sexes.

"With regard to the movement for social justice, it can hardly be irrelevant to the present study to state that many of those who during the past two decades and a half have been leaders in the movement to uplift the proletariat, are commonly understood to be among the wealthiest men of the country today. Student groups

contending against the tendency of socialistic leaders to throttle freedom of thought in institutions of higher learning have repeatedly called attention to the discrepancy between the socialistic pronouncements of these leaders on the one hand, and their wealth and luxurious mode of living on the other.

"While there are many historic factors lying back of the anti-religious movement in Mexico today, its moving force, in its more radical form, is to be found in the zealous propaganda waged by the Marxist school. This type of thought has capitalized the historic anti-clerical attitude, the distrust of American imperialism, the materialistic tendencies of certain scientists, and the social and economic discontent of the masses, and has woven them all into the fabric of a social plan with atheism at its center. There is often evident a 'scientific' intolerance quite as active and as uncompromising as religious intolerance could possibly be. Just at present there is little unity between the several groups represented; there are included all shades of opinion, from the anti-clericals who still distinguish between the clergy and the Church, to the avowedly atheistic and violently destructive communist. These different elements are struggling to capture the thought and support of the nation. It is in these mutually contradictory and opposing tendencies within the present social and economic movement in Mexico, that there is to be found the secret of the confused policy toward religion, which is so perplexing to the student of present religious conditions.

# PRESENT LIMITATIONS ON RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN MEXICO (AS REVEALED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND ENACTMENTS RELATING THERETO)

*“Properties:—*Art. 27 of the Constitution of 1917, Paragraph II., states that ‘Places of public worship are the property of the Nation, as represented by the Federal Government, which shall determine which of them may continue to be devoted to their present purposes.’ ‘All places of public worship which shall later be erected shall be the property of the Nation.’ Many enactments, regulations and court decisions have made this clause to mean that the Government may take a church building from one denomination and give it to another, or may arbitrarily withdraw from the use of a church organization any churches which are deemed unnecessary.

“The same Art. also states that churches shall not have legal capacity to acquire, hold or administer real property or loans on the same. This is more stringent than the same article in the Constitution of 1857, for that said that no church ‘shall have legal capacity to acquire title to, or administer, real property, other than the buildings immediately and directly destined to the services or purposes of the said corporations and institutions.’

“Art. 27 is still more inclusive when it speaks of other buildings besides churches. ‘Episcopal residences, rectories, seminaries, orphan asylums, or collegiate establishments of religious institutions, convents or any



other buildings built or designed for the administration, propaganda, or teaching of any religious creed shall forthwith vest, as of full right, directly in the Nation, to be used exclusively for the public services of the Federation of the States, within their respective jurisdictions.'

"A circular issued by the Attorney General of the Republic on February 20, 1934, clearly states that it is only necessary to prove that a building had at some time been used as indicated above or that it is or has been in the possession of a religious organization or of an individual with ecclesiastical character or position, in order to pass it at once to the power of the Nation. In proof of this is the fact that the Archbishop of Mexico has had taken from him successively two buildings; the part of the School of Medicine where he resided and had his offices, and a private residence given to him on Brazil Street. The latter is now used for the Attorney General's offices.

#### EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

"The Six-Year Plan of the National Revolutionary Party contains this paragraph under the heading of education: 'The primary school, in addition to excluding all religious teaching, will supply a true, scientific, and rational (reasonable) reply to each and everyone of the questions that should be resolved in the spirit of those being educated, in order to form for them an exact and positive concept of the world which surrounds them and

of the society in which they live, since otherwise the school will not fulfill its social mission.'

"Carrying out the above instructions, Art. Third of the Constitution of 1857, which said that instruction should be lay or secular, was reformed and went into effect December 1, 1934, as follows: 'The education which the State gives shall be socialistic and, in addition to excluding all religious doctrine, it will combat fanaticism and prejudices, to which end the school will organize its teachings and activities in such a form that it will be possible to create in the minds of the youth a rational and exact concept of the universe and of social life.' Space does not permit giving the rest of this Art., nor the regulations which govern private schools, nor the interpretations made by the Secretary of Public Education, but it is readily seen that the nature of the teaching shall be socialistic, non-religious, and in practice, in many schools, it is anti-religious. In fact, the teachers in the primary schools in the Federal District are required to sign a declaration to the effect that 'they do not belong, nor pretend to belong, to any religious institution.'

### MINISTERS OF RELIGION

"Art. 130 of the Constitution of 1917 says: 'Ministers of religious creeds shall be considered as persons exercising a profession, and shall be directly subject to the laws enacted on the matter.' 'The State legislatures shall have the exclusive power of determining the maximum number of ministers of religious creeds, according

to the needs of each locality. Only a Mexican by birth may be a minister of any religious creed in Mexico.'

"'No ministers of religious creeds shall, either in public or private meetings, or in acts of worship or religious propaganda, criticize the fundamental laws of the country, the authorities in particular, or the Government in general; they shall have no vote, nor be eligible to office, nor shall they be entitled to assemble for political purposes.

"'No minister of any religious creed may inherit, either on his own behalf or by means of a trustee or otherwise, any real property occupied by any association of religious propaganda for religious or charitable purposes. Ministers of religious creeds are incapable legally of inheriting by will from ministers of the same religious creed or from any private individual to whom they are not related by blood within the fourth decree.

"'All real and personal property pertaining to the clergy or to religious institutions shall be governed, in so far as their acquisition by private parties is concerned, in conformity with Art. 27 of this Constitution.'

"About 1927 a presidential decree made it unlawful for any foreigner to take part in religious propaganda in public, that is, on the streets, in the markets or in churches or other places of public gathering. This decree has not been enforced with any diligence. In fact, it has been enforced—at least so far as Protestants are concerned—only on rare occasions, and then only as local authorities have chosen to invoke it. It is still on

the books, however, and can be invoked whenever the authorities, local or federal, desire to do so.

"By the above articles it will be seen that foreigners can not be ministers of religion or exercise any ministerial functions. An exception has been made in the case of foreign-speaking colonies, which are allowed a minister of their own language. In a number of states a preacher may officiate only in the church of which he is the registered pastor. Public religious service may be held only in a public building set aside for that purpose and registered with the Government, said building, of course, being considered the property of the Nation. Presumptive evidence that a private house is being used for religious services is sufficient to make the house liable to confiscation.

### RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS

"A decree was published February 15, 1935, which stated that it is prohibited to circulate through the mails: '1/ Correspondence which is offensive or belittling to the Nation or its Government and 2/ correspondence which implies propaganda or diffusion of any religious doctrine.'

### EFFECT OF THESE LIMITATIONS UPON PROTESTANT WORK

"At the outset, it should be made clear that the law varies in its application from one part of the country to another. What is possible under the local interpretation and application in, say, Merida, is impossible in

Monterrey, and *vice versa*. Therefore, with respect to many details, it is impossible to make any general statement which will give an accurate picture of the situation in the whole country. The reader will bear this circumstance in mind while reading the report.

"In several states, local state regulations forbidding the holding of public services have resulted in the closing of all churches. In some cases this has been accompanied by the confiscation of the church property by the Government. In most parts of the country, however, church services are being held about as usual. The limitation placed in many states upon the number of ministers who may officiate does not handicap the Protestant Church so seriously as it does the Catholic Church, in view of the fact that up to the present the authorities have considered each Protestant denomination on a par with the whole Catholic Church, and, in addition, the relative fewness of the Protestants in this instance works in their favor. In some regions the minister is prohibited from officiating in any other than his own church building. This, naturally, is a handicap, as in many cases the minister's parish is rather large, sometimes many horseback or even train hours across. Another provision in force in some states which taxes the ingenuity of the ministers to keep it from being prohibitive is the levying of a 'professional tax.' In one state, for instance, this tax is 36 pesos a month. For a minister who is extremely fortunate if he gets a total income from the church of 100 pesos, this would be

practically prohibitive if he did not find some other source of income, such as carpentry or shoemaking.

"In view of the law regarding the limiting of public religious services to public church buildings, the Evangelicals have been in doubt at times as to whether the Government would interfere with cottage prayer meetings. In some states, such as Tabasco, even these meetings have been interfered with by the state authorities, although quite generally through the country they have been held without interference from the authorities. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain permission from the Government for the opening of church buildings in new centers, so it is to be hoped that the cottage meetings will not be stopped.

"Missionaries, of course, being in the category of foreigners, are not allowed to officiate as ministers. That means that they can not be pastors of churches and can not baptize, marry, or conduct communion or funeral services. What other limitations are placed on the activities of missionaries depends on local conditions and interpretations. In some parts of the country, for instance, missionaries are not permitted to preach or give talks in the churches, while in other parts they are quite free to do so. No ordained missionaries may teach in any government-recognized school. What further militates against missionary work is the fact that it is well-nigh impossible for foreigners to get into the country for permanent residence. This is in line with the general nationalization movement and is entirely apart from the religious situation as such.

"The social work of the missions and churches as conducted in social centers goes on more or less as usual, except that in some parts of the country it has been necessary to eliminate all religious aspects of the program except the personal work which may be done by those engaged in the activities of the centers. In other parts of the country religious work may still be done in social centers. In the northern part of the field the future of the social work is in doubt pending an answer from the local governments to petitions to continue the work.

"Such medical work as has been carried on by the missions has not been interfered with. There are, however, certain circumstances which are proving a handicap to the work. One of these circumstances is the increasing difficulty experienced by foreign institutions in holding property in Mexico. Another is the increasing difficulty experienced by foreigners in carrying on professional work in Mexico in view of the policy of 'Mexico for the Mexicans', which demands that any work that may be done by a Mexican be placed in the hands of a national. In the third place, the difficulty, mentioned above, with regard to getting foreigners into the country permanently, affects very seriously the medical work, as it makes it almost impossible to get missionary doctors and nurses into the country.

"The recent presidential decree prohibiting the circulation of religious propaganda through the mails is being enforced inconsistently. Some Protestant religious journals are being carried by the mails, while others

are not. So far, the Bible has been permitted to circulate freely through the mails. We know of only one exception to this rule. It is still to be seen, however, just how strictly the decree will be enforced and what the result will be.

"Protestant services have been affected to some extent by the fact that government agencies frequently organize special programs on Sunday, to which teachers, pupils and workingmen are compelled to go, making it impossible for Christians to observe the Lord's Day as they would like to do.

"A few words would be in order regarding the adaptation which the Protestant forces are making in order to cope with the situation. The churches (with the exception of those closed in the states referred to earlier in this report), are carrying on as usual, and everywhere emphasis is being given to family worship. More attention is being given to the preparation and use of lay leaders in the church and its field of activity. Cottage prayer meetings are being held where it is impossible to hold regular church services. Likewise more attention is being given to group work, such as clubs and discussion groups and camps for young people. Personal work is being emphasized, and colportage work goes on apace, more Bibles and portions thereof being sold right now than ever before. To compensate for the closing of mission schools, hostels are being opened for students of government schools, and student evangelism is being developed. Plans are being made to insure the distribution of Christian literature throughout the country in



case the decree regarding the use of mails for such purposes is rigorously enforced. The missionaries are adapting themselves to the situation and the law; are taking second place to nationals (a process which has been going on for some years now anyway); are fitting in wherever possible, and in some cases are mapping out entirely new work for themselves.

#### THE PROTESTANT ATTITUDE IN THE PRESENT SITUATION

“And what, then, is the attitude of the Protestant people in Mexico in view of the present situation? First of all, we should state that the Evangelicals of Mexico are whole-heartedly for the Revolution—that is, the great social movement for the uplift of the Mexican people, which first took form in the revolt against the Díaz régime. The ideals of the Revolution and all that is good in it are things very near to the Evangelical heart, because they are Christian and look to the uplifting of a whole people. It would be difficult to find a Protestant in Mexico who would exchange the present situation, with all its manifest shortcomings, for the ‘good old days’ of Don Porfirio Díaz and his international feudalism. Protestants, however, while loyally seeking to support the present administration and obey the law as far as they can do so without denying their faith, look with alarm upon the Marxist and anti-religious tendency of much of today’s legislation and decrees, particularly such as limit freedom of thought and religious expression. Their attitude is mainly that

of prayerful watching and waiting to see what is going to be the upshot of it all, just as the businessmen of Mexico are 'watchfully waiting' to see how far to the left the Government will go.

"Protestants are quite unanimously united in this attitude, and before calling attention to some details in regard to which there is not such unanimous opinion, it would be well to recall an essential difference between the Protestant attitude and that of the Catholic Church. The latter, as is well known, puts the Pope above the State, and finds it impossible to support a Government which no longer consents to be the tool of Romish machinations. The Protestant Church can with all good conscience support the State as long as it does not seek to compel disobedience to God's commands. The Catholic position is that whatever runs contrary to the Church Hierarchy must be resisted. An additional circumstance which makes it impossible for the Evangelical Church to make common cause with the Catholic Church in the present struggle is the fact that historically the latter has been violently opposed to all efforts in the direction of social and economic reform, and has always allied itself with the reactionary elements, as was brought out in the section of this report dealing with the historic basis of the present situation, and the Protestant Church cannot afford to get itself identified with such a trend.

"And now to mention some aspects of the Protestant position which do not command the unanimous agreement that characterizes the phases already spoken of.

There is a difference of opinion as to how radically the present social and economic order should be reformed, although it is probably true that the vast majority of Mexican Evangelicals would favor quite a radical shaking-down, as long as the resulting order would not be atheistic. Another difference will be found in the attitude toward the Catholic Church. Some feel a profound sympathy with the Catholic Church in its present unhappy situation. Others, undoubtedly the large majority, feel that it is as an institution reaping what it has sown, it being somewhat incongruous for the Catholic Church to be talking about religious liberty, after all these years of persecuting Protestants and other 'heretics.' All, however, would probably make a distinction between the Catholic hierarchy, deserving of condemnation, and the great mass of the Catholic people, oppressed and deluded for so many years.

"Protestants and Catholics come nearest to a sympathetic understanding when they face the problem of sending their children to the rationalistic and usually, anti-religious primary and secondary schools under Government supervision. No other primary and secondary schools are permitted, unless the National University wins its fight to maintain its own secondary school. Little by little the Government is making more radical demands on its teachers, and in several states they are required to sign statements to the effect that they have no religious connections whatever, but rather disbelieve in God and will teach their pupils that there is no God. This development in the educational policy of the Gov-

ernment is, perhaps, the most consternating aspect of the whole situation. And it is in facing this problem in meetings of groups of parents that Protestants and Catholics find themselves defending the same point of view.

"There is a difference of opinion among Protestants as to whether the Protestant Church as such should make representations to the Government regarding the situation and its attitude thereto, and what form such representation should take. It would be difficult to ascertain what the majority opinion in this matter would be. Likewise, there is no common agreement as to the extent to which Christians should submit to the anti-religious laws and decrees, or perhaps, better stated, just where the line should be drawn beyond which submission to the Government would mean disloyalty to God. This question, of course, becomes almost a personal one, as it is a matter of the dictates of the individual conscience. To sum up—with regard to the Evangelical attitude, we may say that the Protestant Church in Mexico is thoroughly 'revolutionary' and law-abiding, but determined to be loyal to Christ at all costs, while waiting, watching, praying, and working."

Despite all this, the Minister of Foreign Relations has at times publicly asserted that the Roman Catholic Church is the only church that has complained of any restraint on its ministry.

While it is not my purpose or province to attempt an analysis of Protestant work in Mexico, I cannot forbear

saying that it has been a moral and spiritual leaven in Mexican social life wherever it has touched it. This was conceded by all liberal Roman Catholics. It has in many ways served to raise the grade of public service. Some of its outstanding leaders have become national or state figures. To illustrate this I might take one community which came under my observation—the city of Guadalajara. When I came to talk with the Secretary of State, I found that he was a former teacher in the Protestant college. The secretary of the municipal government and the secretary of the local organization of the Revolutionary Party is a graduate of the college and has a brother now attending it. The Superintendent of Schools of the State of Jalisco was a former teacher. The continuation of the Protestant school in Guadalajara was secured upon the recommendation of the state government, the local branch of the National Revolutionary Party and the State Department of Education. A nephew of the governor of Jalisco is in the school, and the *Mayor Oficial* in one of the State Departments has two sons in the school. The principal was selected as the official orator of this year's celebration of the birth of Juárez. He lectures for the National Revolutionary Party. While I was in Guadalajara word came that the new rector of the University was a former night school pupil in the Protestant College. Such illustrations could be many times multiplied.

Hardly anyone is willing to prophesy, however, that Mexico is at all likely ever to be substantially Protestant, although the present experiences may possibly so

deepen the evangelical life of the laymen as to greatly strengthen Protestant influence, even if it should be largely relegated to the realm of purely moral and social influence.

One wonders how different things might have been had the Roman Catholic Church been willing to learn something from Protestant sources. On the other hand, there were in the Catholic Church not a few priests with whom Protestant ministers would have found much in common. Indeed, in one locality which I visited, where both Catholic and Protestant work were most satisfactory, or perhaps one had better say the least injured, I found that for several years the Protestant leader in that locality had been on friendly terms with many Catholics, including an occasional priest. Later on I happened to meet a group of citizens of that community on the train and I found that every one of them knew this missionary and spoke highly of him. The Protestant situation in Mexico is worthy of protracted thoughtful study, by the Home Boards and by those in the field, preferably in conference together.

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CONCLUSIONS: POLITICAL TRENDS  
AND TENDENCIES: THEIR  
INFLUENCE ON RELIGION

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WHILE it is possible that my friends—Protestant, Catholic and political—might expect me to attempt the expression of a final judgment, they must permit me to content myself with little more than a submission of the evidence to my readers as a jury, asking them to consider the testimony in the light of the three problems involved:

1. The conflict between State and Church as institutions for the determination of their rights and powers.

2. The bearing on this of the trends and tendencies toward a Mexican Totalitarian State.

3. The ultimate question as to whether the issue is between a spiritual conception and interpretation of the universe and humanity; and a mechanistic, materialistic, humanistic *ideologia*.

I venture to say that their verdict is likely to be de-

terminated largely by their answer to this last question, which is now one of the deepest consequence not only in Mexico but throughout the world.

The conflict is a struggle for rights, privileges and powers. There appear to be three questions at issue between official representatives of State and Church, and a fourth which is in the background.

Is the State suppressing Religious Liberty?

Is the State "persecuting" the Church?

Is the State anti-religious rather than simply anti-clerical and anti-Church?

The fourth question is: How far is the State justified in taking away the liberty of the Church? This question is subjected less to debate because the State answers the three other questions in the negative.

## I. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH

The Roman Catholic Church declares that the State is persecuting the Church and suppressing, not only its liberties, but also those of the people. The Secretary of Foreign Relations and the Mexican Ambassador to the United States repeatedly deny by press and radio that there is any such oppression, although they do not go very far in attempting to disprove specific charges of the Church.

Without doubt the representatives of the Mexican State mean to convey something like this: The individual in Mexico may choose his own creed, he may think about religion, may pray, may worship in the in-



violable solitude of personality, without any hindrance. The State has not attempted to touch the Church creed as such. President Cárdenas stated it in this way: "Government action only endeavors to enforce exact compliance with the laws in force regulating religious worship." This is a somewhat disingenuous answer in view of the fact that the laws and regulations which are the instruments of the alleged persecution and suppression of liberty have been enacted or are employed for that purpose.

The response of the Church is substantially this: The State has taken away from the worshipper the means essential to him by which, through tradition and custom established from childhood, substantiated by the impulses of conscience, he may express his worship, confess his sins, profess his repentance and be the recipient of divine grace. His marriage is to him a sacrament, and in the face of death he feels the need of the ministries of the Church, as elements in his creed.

Now that does not mean to me, as a Protestant, or to my Protestant readers, what it does to the plain man and woman in Mexico, and we must try to think of it in their language. I have profound respect for a sincere Catholic and these things are essential to *his* religious liberty. He wants liberty to have a priest for his confession, for his sacrament, for the last rites of the dying and dead in his bereaved home. The exercise of his freedom requires the offices of Church and priest. This is the "creed" of his church and of his personal religion.

The State, therefore, when it declares that the laws do not interfere with his "creed," is in grievous error.

Sr. Portes Gil, at that time President of the Republic, said on one occasion, "I am glad to take advantage of this opportunity to declare publicly and very clearly that it is not the purpose of the Constitution *nor of the laws*, nor of the Government of the Republic, to destroy the identity of the Catholic Church or of any other, *or to interfere in any way with its spiritual functions.*"

If that is the question at issue, then there can be but one opinion. There are two matters on which, as an objective and candid narrator, I am obligated to be more than a mere fact-finder, regardless of the consequences. The State is interfering with the "spiritual functions" of the Church and of the Catholic worshipper. *The State is suppressing religious liberty*, when it closes the worshipper's church, when it deprives him of his priest, when it shuts out religion from his home, both as teaching and as ministration. It suppresses religious liberty to the Church as an institution, not only by these same restraints, but by its destruction of the Church's identity and by the demolition of its organization.

Article 24 of the Constitution reads: "Every one is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practice all ceremonies, devotions or observances of his respective creed, either in places of public worship or at

home, provided they do not constitute an offense punishable by law."

This can hardly have been intended as anything but a bill of rights. But the present Government is employing the closing words of this article of the Constitution as what is termed a "joker," in such a manner as to completely nullify it. Such use of the last clause as is now being made of it makes the Constitution subject to the whim of every succeeding legislature. Thus, when Pres. Cárdenas declares that in religious matters the State is but carrying out the Constitution, all he means is that the one article which guarantees religious liberty nullifies that freedom at the same time. One can hardly conceive of anything more specious than the sophistry of the Mexican government in this connection.

The next question at issue is, does the State persecute the Church? The word "persecution," according to the dictionary, means "to pursue in a manner to injure or inflict, to harrow, to inflict cruel or oppressive treatment." Is the State injuring, inflicting, harrowing or oppressing the Church?

Is not that question answered sufficiently when I pass the beautiful Cathedral and find flaming posters of the State plastered on its walls attacking it in violent terms as an institution, or when I go into a church and find it filled with cartoons, some of them vile caricatures of religion itself? Is it not answered when the Government goes into the Cathedral, makes trash heaps of altars and crucifixes, and pastes seals on its paintings of the Madonnas and in the Church offices on the type-

writers, certifying that they are the property of the Government? Is it not answered when the "Red Shirts," even though not authorized, are permitted to invade Church property in riotous manner? It is idle to discuss this question. Even a hasty review of this volume makes it perfectly clear that *the Mexican State is persecuting the Church*. For the Foreign Secretary and the Ambassador to the United States to reiterate denials is as disingenuous as it is inept.

But, of course, that is not the whole story. One might even state the brief for the Mexican Government better than it has done for itself. It does not appear to have thought its case through with sufficient penetration to state it convincingly.

If an institution misuses liberty, it forfeits its right to freedom to such a degree as may be necessary to prevent injury to human welfare, and to the extent of its misuse.

A reliable Roman Catholic writer admits that some of the political activities of the priests have been "questionable," and that there have been periods of "widespread deterioration" in the priesthood. Again, we hardly need to take time discussing this question. There is a good deal in the claim of the State that the Church has forfeited its right to liberties which it has claimed and to powers which formerly it exercised. But the State has little sense of perspective and has not attempted to make any discrimination as to just what immunities should be taken away. It has left almost none of the essential rights. The Government makes its

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own definition of political interference. It rules out any right of the Church or priest to criticise the government, or any law, or to advocate any law. It would be cause for great regret if the Church should regain the temporal power to which it had no justifiable claim, but if it does so as the result of the reaction of the opinions of mankind to the intolerance of the State, it will be the fault of the latter body. The policies of the government are amateurish and almost childish. They are very frequently carried out with a playful sarcasm or a hilarious insolence which are entirely gratuitous. Archbishop Díaz is in every way as much of a gentleman as Sr. Portes Gil, and that is saying a good deal. The Archbishop's arrest on a lonely road in the middle of the night, his long detention and the treatment which accompanied it,\* ought to have brought forth, as I had expected it would, an apology from some gentleman in the government. In my opinion, the representatives of the Mexican government are, to say the least, poor sportsmen. Any honest and courageous referee would rule them off the floor. While undoubtedly there are sincere men in the Cabinet, there is neither sincerity nor sanity in government procedure.

When, moreover, we come to consider the individual Mexican Roman Catholic, he has not, with relatively few exceptions, forfeited his right to liberty. The State, in its institutional attack, has made no effort whatever to preserve his freedom. It has appeared to seek re-

\* The absurd charge was made that he was suspected of carrying a machine gun in his car.

taliation rather than justice. It has been, to some degree, punishing men, and in too large measure, for the misdeeds of their more or less ancient ancestors or predecessors.

One could also wish that the Mexican Government would express its moral indignation more frequently to those not of the Church, but of the State itself, to men whose misdemeanors cry out to the heavens. And at this point I would raise the question as to how far the State's attitude to the religious convictions of its own employees is a suppression of both civil and religious liberty.

That the Church has been fanatical goes without saying, but now we have precisely the same sort of irrationalism, almost to the point of mania, in state circles. In fact, the Government suffers through the boisterous demeanor of some of its representatives as contrasted with the dignity and restraint of the Archbishop of Mexico. There are departmental buildings where intolerance is in the very atmosphere. Just as the intolerant Church wrought its own disaster, so now an equally imperious and supercilious State may seal its own doom.

The Mexican State imperils its efforts for social justice in one realm of the human social order when it does injustice in another. Even when its aims in curtailing the power of the Church are right, its measures are often completely wrong on two counts—they are both unjust and unnecessary. It is a contradiction so plain that the most unlearned may see it—to tell a man he may have religious liberty while preventing him from



exercising it by his own forms, rites and ceremonies, provided these injure no one else.

Perhaps it is appropriate that the constitution of 1917, which is now in force, not only deletes from the previous constitution the phrase "in the name of God" but also that which followed it in the earlier document, "by the authority of the Mexican people." While no one will claim that the Catholic census in Mexico represents the practicing membership of the Church, nevertheless we know perfectly well that the present attitude toward the Church is contrary to the will of a majority, probably of at least three-fourths, of the Mexican people.

I do not register the above observations as instructions to my jury of readers, but will leave them to consider them as testimony to be reviewed in the light of the close of this chapter, and especially in view of the claim of the Mexican State that its sole purpose is "the spiritual liberty of the people," and "the forming of a new soul of the nation."

But now a word to the Church which, in behalf of its liberty, is asking support of the adherents of other religions. I gladly respond to that request, even though His Holiness the Pope declared in recent years that these adherents were, to use his expression, not simply outside the true Church, but that "all these are not of God."\*

\* Catholic friends, who themselves deplore this utterance, tell me that it does not mean just what the words say, and I hope that some day His Holiness may revise these unhappy words.

The Church cannot ask the world to ignore past history in which its wrong-doing has resulted in injury to the people, especially in view of the fact that it has continued its attitude, in some measure, down to very near the present hour. That the Church is now in a different temper in Mexico appears evident. If this is genuine—and I believe it is on the part of many of the Church dignitaries—the jury should take it into account.

I learn, on Catholic authority, that there are countries, including some in South America, with whose governments Cardinal Gasparri has concluded concordats, including the guarantees of religious liberty to other religious bodies. It is a pity that such an agreement has not been made with Mexico.

The Church cannot appropriately demand the restoration of its freedom, nor can it ask those outside its fold to do so, unless it is ready to pledge itself to give to others *the same liberty it asks for itself*. It must never again, in Mexico or anywhere else, try to influence either State or people to suppress the liberty of worshippers who would pray in other than Catholic temples. It must not only correct the errors set forth in Sr. Portes Gil's indictment, but it should analyze his statement to see how far it is true that it has, in recent years, failed to eradicate superstition, how far it has sought and employed material and temporal, as well as spiritual, weapons; numerous other matters requiring reform will readily suggest themselves. One man, who has rendered great service to the Mexican nation and

who is deeply sympathetic with the Church, expressed the opinion to me that had the Roman Catholic Church manifested a real belief in liberty by treating the Protestants justly, it might now be in a position to withstand the threatened suppression of religion. He believed that, by weakening the case of the State, it would have altered the entire situation.

A new spirit is needed in both Government and Church, and a new understanding more fundamental than that arranged with the help of Ambassador Morrow. It is time to put a stop to the present clanging of charges and counter-charges. The State should define its Socialism, or at least put it in some form of simple principle, and the Church might make its meaning clearer when it condemns what it calls "Socialism." I have ventured to request that the Apostolic Delegate respectfully convey this suggestion to His Holiness the Pope. But the reader may still reserve any attempt to render a verdict until he has read the closing words of this chapter.

## 2. TRENDS AND TENDENCIES TOWARD A TOTALITARIAN STATE

The numerous indications of political development in Mexico fail to suggest just what kind of a totalitarian state may result. We will state some of these evidences more or less at random. There is fairly complete federal power over land and water. The syndicates and cooperatives are being put under state direction, and likewise the associations of farmers. There is an increas-

ing control over the banks. I am told that the Federal Government owns a controlling share in the railroads of the country, while its President arbitrates the strikes on the roads. We have already seen the extent to which the Government dominates the labor unions, and it is reported that a more sweeping system similar to that of Germany, including control of capital, is contemplated. All of the cooperative societies are called upon to adjust their constitutions to the detailed laws of the nation.

This process extends through the states. Resources are being centralized in the Federal Government. The states are heavily taxed to support it. There is increasing attempt to control the state governments from Mexico City. The concentration of power in the hands of the Federal Government seems to constitute as bold an effort at totalitarianism as any in Europe, especially when you take into account the wide diversities of these states. Within the states and within the towns of the states, committees of arbitration are set up, over which the Government exercises control. Thus Mexico appears to be proceeding toward a republic of totalitarian states inside one comprehensive totalitarian state. The significance of this tendency has no inconsiderable bearing upon our final consideration. Other than the possibility that the silent Calles is filling that position, the dictatorship does not appear to have been filled, although there are several governors of states who, on the basis of their efficiency, might well qualify as candidates.

Like both Fascist and Communistic States of Europe, the Mexican Government sees the importance of the youth of the nation. Less than a year ago General Calles said, "We must now enter and take possession of the *conscience* of the children and the consciousness of the young, because they do belong and should belong to the community. They belong to the collectivity." True enough if it means what it ought to mean. But as far as we can judge the "collectivity" seems to be little more than a political party.

We have already seen in Chapter IV the extent to which the Government has taken possession of education, has federalized rural schools, has attempted to encroach upon the universities and, finally, how it has endeavored to bring education into conformity with a politico-social *ideologia*, to use the favorite term, which is as good as any to describe so vague a concept. There are a good many analogies to what has been going on in Germany.

### 3. RELIGION AND HUMANISM

The question as to whether or not Mexico is approaching Fascism or Communism is one in which there is some variety of opinion. So far as religion is concerned, it makes little difference whether Mexico has atheism, as in Russia, or the kind of non-Christian cult which is attempting to make its way in Germany, where National Bishop Mueller recently made Easter in part a memorial of the birthday of Adolf Hitler.

During the early years of the Revolution, although

there was a growing popular indifference to the Church and an increasing hostility on the part of the State, there were practically no signs of opposition to religion in itself. More than once leaders of the Revolution have, like Hitler in his statement regarding National Socialism, declared that the movement was fundamentally Christian. When the Church came under criticism later on those same leaders declared that it was the Church which had become de-Christianized.

As previously recorded, Sr. Portes Gil expressed the opinion to me that Article 3 of the constitution did not imply atheism. How far the present seemingly anti-religious attitude of the Government is simply taken because of inability to differentiate between religion and the Roman Catholic Church, it is hard to tell. If these attacks were solely institutional attacks on the Roman Catholic Church as such, one would look for the same sort of consideration for the Protestant Church as previously prevailed. In all probability the issue largely depends on the extent to which communistic principles are adopted. Some informed people believe that the Government is really following the Russian path despite its lack of any political relationship with Russia, while others think that the tendency is more in the direction of the new European intellectual ideals. The most we can do at this time is to indicate some things which have either the communistic, or more particularly, the atheistic cast.

When talking with me a man who rendered high service to the nation and to the National Revolutionary

Party some years ago, called my attention to a newspaper article stating that a proposition had been made to expel all members of churches from the Party and to permit no church member to join it. He remarked sadly, "That would rule me out." While in Mexico I learned of the expulsion of a member "for having sympathy with religion."

*Cristo Rey*, a newspaper previously quoted, which imitates the style of Russian journals, carries alongside its front-page title a caricature of Jesus, in an apparently intoxicated condition wearing a crown at a rakish angle, suggestive of ribaldry. When I told Sr. Portes Gil that the Government was charged with being responsible for the publication, he answered that the allegation was "absolutely false."\* I have no doubt that he thought he was telling the truth, for there is a good deal of duplicity inside state circles. The right hand of the Government often does not know what the left hand is doing. As a matter of fact, however, I found that the street address named in the headline of the paper was but a sub or pseudo office and that the paper was printed in and issued from the official printing office of the Department of Agriculture. From that same office are issued some of the hideous cartoons to which reference has been made, and on its walls are posters de-

\* The Foreign Minister's statement in full was as follows: *Absolutamente falso. Dígame que hay muchos grupos políticos que simpatizan con el Gobierno, y que posiblemente alguno de estos grupos publique ese periódico, pero no sostenido por el Gobierno. Son pequeños grupos exaltados que no representan la opinión del Gobierno, aunque sí simpatizan con él.*

claring that the oppressed state of the people is due to "belief in God."

In his essay printed with the imprint of his cabinet office, to which reference has been made,\* Sr. Portes Gil does reverent homage to Jesus, refers to Him as "the Master," capitalizes the pronouns in referring to Him, appeals to "the Gospel" of Jesus, declares that "Mexico applauds" elements of "the doctrine" of the Master—while the printing presses of the Department of Agriculture continue to turn out another piece of literature weekly carrying a repulsive representation of Jesus on its headline. The voice sounds like that of Jacob but the hand is that of Esau. Sr. Portes Gil had assured me that the Cabinet members shared the same *ideologia*. Evidently this term has considerable amplitude in its circumferential area.

One can stand much of the contradictoriness of Mexican politics, but not quite to the extent of "collective" (to use the oft employed term) hypocrisy. Nor can one avoid the question as to whether or not the document of the Secretary of Foreign Relations is intended for consumption in the United States,† while that issued from the Department of Agriculture is prepared for the edification of the peasants of Mexico.

A member of the cabinet is said to have named his son Lenin, and one Government under-official is de-

\* See page 114.

† In a volume just written by Dr. John A. MacKay ("That Other America," Friendship Press), the author quotes the section of Sr. Portes Gil's document referred to and concludes that "surely no anti-religious spirit could have penned" such sentiments.



clared to have had printed on the bottom of his card "a personal enemy of God." The bookstore windows are well filled with such volumes as *Cristianismo Y Comunismo*. Among publications in the Department of Education you find God spelled *dios*. Caricatures of the Lord's Prayer are found in schools. In a recent issue of *Cristo Rey* the crucifixion is represented with a donkey as the central figure. This picture has been distributed in schools. It would be rather hard for the Government itself to disavow some of the hideous cartoons on religion in view of the fact that they are sometimes discovered on the walls of public buildings.

As I have said elsewhere, the Government is attempting to take possession or secure the use of modern art. The famous frescoes of Diego Rivera contain some satires to which one would not object. One which is particularly striking represents antiquated professors of political economy sitting and dreaming on piles of their books. In another, two rich, well-known Americans are represented feasting at a dinner table while the poor look on. Inasmuch as these two men are known among us to be particularly circumspect, Rivera has depicted them inappropriately at dinner in the presence of scantily dressed women.

The murals throughout the building of the Department of Education are extremely communistic in tone, representing the coming revolution in the most violent terms. These frescoes, of course, frequently represent the anti-church attitude of the Government, and sometimes go far beyond that.

More significant still are the murals in the National Preparatory School. These were painted by José Clemente Orozco and his pupils while the University still formed part of the Ministry of Education. Orozco stands second only to Diego Rivera amongst contemporary Mexican painters, and some would even hold that this much embittered man, who lost an arm many years ago, is the greater artist of the two. He is also a Radical.

Some of his murals are startling. One reveals the figure of Christ, swollen and bloated almost to the bursting point, a tiny crown of thorns resting upon a luxurious growth of hair. It would be impossible to imagine a more repulsive figure, and the leer in the protruding eyes is not likely to be forgotten. He holds a Phrygian Cap of Liberty in his left hand; an emaciated worker stands shuddering by his side, and Christ is drawing his attention to that object, in evident connivance with a capitalist who is preparing to plunge a dagger into the worker's back. Another mural reveals a wicked old man, representing God the Father. The angry, cross-eyed figure is quite as impressive and repellent as that of Christ. He is holding an orb, whilst a group of sheepish "bourgeois" worships at his feet.

These murals, which intrude themselves daily upon the attention of several hundred young students of both sexes, suggest that antireligious tendencies have existed for several years amongst the authorities of the Ministry of Education. They are certainly not in accordance with the mood of the University at present, but the Univer-

sity authorities, who object to them most strongly, have apparently not considered it diplomatic to have them obliterated.

Attempts to establish rites and practices of a "revolutionary" character, in place of the ordinary Christian acts of belief such as christenings, weddings and the like, are sometimes reported from different parts of the country. The former Governor of the State of Veracruz, Adelberto Tejeda, has openly encouraged some of these ceremonies: in fact, he even acted as *padrino* in several "revolutionary" baptisms. *Padrino*, literally translated, means "godfather," but as the ceremonies are avowedly atheistic the English term can hardly be applied with propriety.

*Excelsior*, the well known daily, gives an interesting account of a couple of Radical baptisms which were celebrated in Puebla on March 24th by members of the *Confederación Campesina Emiliano Zapata*, a peasant organization. Solemn invitations were issued and the children were named "Lenin" and "Gracchus" respectively. Water was employed in part of the ceremony, but honey, "the product of bees symbolic of toil and labor," took the place of water to some extent. The Secretary of the *Confederación* officiated: the formula he used is difficult to translate, as even the original Spanish is confused and leaves much to be desired. But it roughly went as follows:

"In the name of the revolutionary postulates and of the clamour of the disinherited the world over, I appear as Secretary General of the *Confederación Cam-*

*pesina Emiliano Zapata* of the State of Puebla, in the Republic of Mexico, freely and spontaneously elected by the will of the peasant masses of the said State, and I name thee Lenin, after the apostle of the proletariat, whose eyes were glass, beholding the sorrows of the Crucifixion of the peoples of the world. I give thee that name in his memory, that thou mayst bear it through life. I will give thee water on thy head: water, which is a symbol of lustration and a primordial element necessary for human life. I give thee honey, made by bees, symbolic of toil and labor: the beings which produced it are the image of what man ought to be on earth. Receive the water . . . all the honey . . . give me thy hands that I may express to thee my desire and that of my brethren that they may never be imbrued with human blood."

Opponents of the administration also hold that the great mausoleum which is being erected in honor of General Obregón at San Angel, a small town close to Mexico City where the great revolutionary leader was assassinated, is almost a veiled attempt at deification. A kind of *sanctum sanctorum* has been set apart containing the stones still bearing traces of his blood, and there is also an altar of a distinctly ecclesiastical type, where the effigy of General Obregón himself occupies the place usually held by the Crucifix, with an armed soldier on either side instead of the customary angels.

This costly monument, be it said incidentally, is being built out of funds compulsorily extracted from all the property holders of San Angel. They have not unrea-

sonably expostulated, holding that they do not see why they should be made to pay for the mausoleum in this fashion, since neither General Obregón himself nor his murderer had any connection whatsoever with San Angel: The murderer chose San Angel just as he might have chosen any other place. Although their moral and legal position is apparently quite sound they have been unable to obtain redress.

In these ceremonies we see an approach to the non-Christian cults of Germany. One hears also of the increase of theosophic and other occult groups here and there. There is considerable feeling, which I am inclined to share, that the Mexican mind is not temperamentally communistic, and what form the completion of the Revolution, or another to follow it, will take, can hardly be prophesied.

As has been, I trust, made clear in the conflict between the Church and the State, each does the other a good deal of injustice and neither is willing to take the other at its best. If the Mexican Government should become atheistic, it will not be by the will of the Mexican people. I have seen the present conflict described as an irresistible force meeting an immovable body. Even so, in the last analysis, the only irresistible force and the only immovable body are God and human justice.

While in Mexico I was not the most deeply impressed by the Apostolic Delegate, by Archbishop Díaz and the Hierarchy, nor by President Cárdenas, Portes Gil and the Mexican Government. I found myself constantly

thinking in terms of the Mexican people, and the greatest emotion I can recall was that aroused by those four leaders of the workers.\* Those men profoundly moved me. There was one in jumper and overalls who made his plea more eloquently than I can, in language more appropriate than mine, for a spiritual "concept of the universe," even though it was not entirely "scientific" and "exact." He wanted that spiritual ideal in his own soul, in his home, for his children and for his fellow men. In his talk with me he said little about work and wages. His mind and heart were set upon spiritual liberty and he might, in answer to a State that would claim to leave his freedom but refuse him his ways of exercising it, quote the words of William Shakespeare

"Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:  
You take my house, when you do take the prop  
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,  
When you do take the means whereby I live."

Such men as he are the hope of Mexico. Well, both State and Church sadly need to rediscover the true meaning and exercise of personal, civil and religious liberty and the true significance of education.

Finally, the government of Mexico, with all its weaknesses, is undoubtedly far more earnest in its desire for social reform than its critics admit. The Roman Church in Mexico, while in some ways still far from the realization of Christian ideals, has done much more

\* See page 197.

for the people of Mexico than the State will allow. They are both powerful—the State through its political and material forces, the Church by its hold upon the hearts of the people. A protracted conflict will wrack and wreck the nation, while, on the other hand, a government progressive and sane and a Church hierarchy making fewer claims but offering larger service, might save the nation and be an example to the world.

As one surveys the world today two issues are clear: firstly, the problems of relation between Church and State, and between nationalism and super-nationalism, are major concerns; secondly, the Christian Churches; Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox, face the common danger of political and social tendencies towards materialism and humanism. These are the considerations confronting us as these new theories, concepts and realities displace the spiritual interpretation of the universe and human life which is the heart of Christianity and as national or tribal gods become objects of human worship.

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